

Language in the Mirror:
Language Ideologies, Schooling and Islam in Qatar

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Doctorate of Philosophy
under the executive committee of
the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
2013

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ABSTRACT

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My study explores language ideologies in the capital city of Doha, Qatar, where school reform movements are placing greater emphasis on English language acquisition. Through ethnography and a revised theory of language ideologies, I argue that as languages come in greater contact in multi-lingual spaces, mediation must occur between the new and old relationships that are emerging as a result of population growth, policy changes and cross-cultural interactions. I interrogate the development concept of the “knowledge economy” as it is used to justify old and new language ideologies regarding Arabic and English. As Qataris change their education systems in response to the economic development framework of the “knowledge economy,” they are promoting language ideologies that designate English as useful for the economy and “global” citizenship and Qatari Arabic and Standard Arabic as useful for religious and cultural reasons.

I argue that Standard English, through its association with the “knowledge economy,” becomes “de-localized” and branded an “international” language. This ideology presents English as a modern language free of the society in which it is embedded, to circulate around the globe. In contrast, Standard Arabic is represented as stiff, archaic language of religious traditions and Qatari Arabic is presented as the language of oral culture and ethnonationalism. These findings counter the arguments of scholars who have viewed Arabic’s linguistic diversity as a binary of written religious tradition and spoken dialects. I argue that scholars have ignored the metapragmatic analysis of Arabic speakers, who view both Standard Arabic and their regional dialects as one language that needs to be defended against the encroachment of foreign languages.

In chapter one, I explore the history of Qatar through narrative accounts of western historians and Qatari oral and written accounts. I reflect upon the efforts of the current Qatari

leaderships to connect with narratives of globalization through the framework of the “knowledge economy.” In chapter two, I outline the actor-networks of the “knowledge economy” that create a development hierarchy between English, the language of the de-localized “international” citizen, and Arabic, the language of the “local” Qatari. In chapter three, I trace how privatization of schooling affects Arabic teachers and their defense of the value of Arabic through an ideology of “Arabic is the language of the Quran.” In the following chapter, I move to sites of higher education, where orality and literacy of Arabic are disputed by Arabic teachers, Qatari students and non-Qatari students of Arabic. I contend that studying language through the speech community reduces the tendency to see language variability as problematic or a sign of language death. In chapter five, I explore the role of Islam in Arabic language ideologies by juxtaposing discourses of the secular and of religious tradition. While some scholars have argued that Arabic speakers do not fully understand the implications of Arabic’s connection to Islam, my work indicates that speakers are fully aware of this relationship and when necessary, utilize it discursively to promote various political, social and cultural agendas.

In conclusion, I argue that a methodology of actor-network theory has allowed me to write a situated ethnography of globalizing processes. The tracing of actor-networks is ideal for studying the rapid changes in Qatar and the ways in which immense wealth has brought many different types of individuals into the country to create new models of schooling and education. Rather than placing the focus on “international” discourses, knowledge economies and globalization, my ethnography emphasizes the need for situated accounting that combines the metalanguage of academics, policy makers and leaders with those of the individuals affected by reforms and projects of globalization.

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Notes on Transliteration of Arabic

Modern Standard and Classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā l-'aṣr wa fuṣḥā t-turāṭ*): I have used the *International Journal of Middle East Studies Transliteration Guide* to transliterate words or phrases that occur in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic. While widely considered *the* language, I prefer to refer to this variety of Arabic as *a dialect* because it is used in contexts of formal and standardizing language use and therefore has a specialized purpose. It is similar to Standard English that is used for print, schooling and professional culture in the United States.¹

Regional Arabic Dialects (*al mahkia, al ammiya, al darija, al lahja, al mahalia*): For Arabic dialects that are spoken in specific regions, I have used my own system of transliteration. I have transliterated according to the individual pronunciation of my interlocutors and interviewees. As Arabic dialects do not have strict grammatical and denotational code, like their *fusha* counterpart, individuals use their own knowledge of letters and sounds of the Arabic alphabet to write terms that do not exist in the more codified *fusha*. Since there are very few conventions in regards to writing regional Arabic dialects, there is greater variability, range and individual discretion. People are also more likely to be forgiving of this variation, as grammatical conventions and spelling are not strictly enforced. I refer to specific Arabic dialects by referencing the country they are nominally connected to. The Qatari dialect of Arabic is referred to as Qatari Arabic, Egyptian as Egyptian Arabic, and Lebanese as Lebanese Arabic. In Qatar, the Arabic dialects are referred to as *al mahkia*, the spoken. In Egypt and in *fusha*, they are called *al ammiya*, folk language or the language of the masses. In Morocco and Tunisia, they are called *darija*, which literally means “rolling”, but contextually references “slang.” The *mahalia* are “local” languages recognized by territorial or tribal specificity. They are often considered a “dialect of a dialect.”

Translations: Unless specifically stated, all translations of interviews, documents and sources were undertaken by me. I have tried to stay close to the original intention of the speaker or writer in my translations, while simultaneously attuning myself to the way the translation reads in English. Some translations are more literal or formal than others, depending on whether the original speech or text was in Standard Arabic or a regional dialect.

¹ Trudgill (1999) clarified in *Standard English: What it isn't*, how Standard English came to be the dialect of English privileged in writing, schools and other formal spaces where grammatical conventions are strictly followed. While Trudgill notes that it is unusual in English to hear dialects being used to debate topics normally discussed in Standard English, this is normal in other countries and regions. In particular, he cites the case of German, “In German-speaking Switzerland, for example, most speakers use their local nonstandard dialect in nearly all social situations and for nearly all purposes. Thus it is that one may hear, in the corridors of the University of Berne, two philosophy professors discussing the works of Kant using all the appropriate philosophical vocabulary while using the phonology and grammar of their local dialect” (122). This is the case for the Arabic dialects and has been so for a long time.

Acknowledgements

This project would have been impossible without the support and love of family, friends and colleagues who have helped me through challenges and triumphs of academia, field work and motherhood. I would like to thank my husband, Younus Mirza, who has encouraged me throughout the years of our marriage to follow my dreams and passions. Without his gentle nudging and words of praise, I would not have made it this far. I would also like to thank him for helping me bring into the world two beautiful daughters, Inayah and Ayisha, who have been the comfort of my eyes and my heart. Not far behind, is the constant support of my mother, Jobaida Quadir, and my in-laws, Muhammad Yaqub Mirza and Tanveer Mirza. They have each given their time, support and energy to helping me and my family to grow and develop. My mother has been my role model, my caretaker and my critic throughout my life and I continue to grow in my respect and love for her strength of will and her generosity for all things family. In keeping with the theme of family, my sibling, Ashraful, and my sister-in-laws, Asma, Sana and Fatima have been each helpful in their own ways: providing babysitting, a kind ear and words of respect and reaffirmation for the importance of the work I am doing. My gratitude also to the uncles at Sterling Management who fed me lunch and gave me a necessary break from dissertation writing. There are countless unnamed friends and family who helped by babysitting, providing encouragement and praying for me.

I am grateful to the individuals who fill the pages of this study. Qatar has become like a second home to me. I want to acknowledge the hospitality and generosity with which many of my interlocutors opened their homes, shared their thoughts and provided their companionship. In particular, I want to thank Georgetown University in Qatar and Qatar University for helping to partially fund my research. I would also like to thank the many Arabic teachers who allowed me to interview and observe them and many other colleagues and friends who helped me to better understand the ways in which Arabic functioned linguistically and practically. Finally, the

young generation of Qatari men and women who shared their vision of Qatar and their lived experiences with the Arabic language were indispensable to this research.

Lastly are the individuals who have helped me from the beginning of my doctoral coursework through to the writing of my dissertation. My adviser, Herve Varenne, has been a wonderful individual to work with. His theory of education is also his theory of practice: he recognizes that when the necessary tools are provided, individuals can conduct their own bricolage. Lesley Bartlett and Louis Cristillo helped me to focus on the intersection of academia and practice in the fields of education and the Middle East. Brinkley Messick has been generous with his time and wisdom and has helped me to think deeply about theory, language and religion. Fida Adely has been a wonderful colleague who has shared her hard earned wisdom and experience from her disciplinary background in anthropology of education and the Middle East. In addition to these individuals, there were many professors who have shaped my thinking about the issues that fill these pages and I am indebted to each of them. The process of writing is often a lonely one and was greatly improved by the company of several colleagues who took the time to read, edit and comment on my work. Hoda Yousef, Leah Gogel, Juliette Wolfe, Katie Keenan, Attiya Ahmed and Younus Mirza have all looked at various drafts of this study and given indispensable feedback and advice. I have found that the work of life and the work of writing are not so different: each is made better by reflection, composition and the company of great family and friends.

To My Mom

আমার মায়ের জন্য

لأمي

Prologue: In Search of Arabic

The Arabic language has been an interest of mine for several years and my relationship with the language has been interwoven with several important life events. Born in Bangladesh, my mother taught me the Arabic alphabet and several small *suras* or chapters of the Qur'an by the time I was five years old. I also learned the English and Bangla alphabets and attended classes at the school across from my family home. When I moved to the United States at the age of five, I would continue to focus on these various languages in different arenas. English became the medium of schooling, television and play with friends outside the home. Bangla was used by my mother in our daily communications and Arabic was taught in the Saturday and Sunday school programs organized by the local Muslim community in Virginia. As a teenager, I became fascinated by the Qur'an and its meaning, wanting to discover the key to unlocking its secrets. When I entered undergraduate at Georgetown University, I chose Arabic as my major and undertook the study of a language which was to give me access to the Qur'an.

My understanding of Arabic changed when I finally had the opportunity to live abroad in Jordan and Qatar. After living abroad in the Arab world, I realized that the Arabic of the Qur'an was not the same as the spoken Arabic used to communicate in daily conversations. In addition, my increasing interest in the intersection of education and culture (sparked by two years of teaching in inner city Washington, D.C. and one year teaching Qatari children at a British school in Doha) led to me to study

anthropology and education in graduate school. Arabic continued as one of my major interests, a space for exploring the nexus of religion, culture and education. I continued to be fascinated by the depth and range of Arabic in cultural life as well as religious and political contexts.

In reading texts and articles of various scholars on the subject of Arabic language, I realized that this search for Arabic was both old and new. Muslims, Orientalists and Arabs alike have long been perplexed by the intertwining of religion, politics and ethnicity under the sign of Arabic. In more recent years, the question of Arabic's divergence between the standard and the spoken has become a subject of increasing interest to scholars of Arabic. In my field research of Arabic in Qatar, I observed the intersection of these genealogies of thinking about Arabic which were competing against newer ideologies of the English language as the language of an economy of education. The Qatari government was melding a strange number of people, languages and ideologies together in one place in the hopes that something magical would happen. Instead, a history of conflicting ideologies of the Arabic language and its relationship to Arab identity are being brought to the fore.

Arabic, as intimately related to my own religious faith has been a central aspect of my spiritual and intellectual explorations. In an academic setting which has oftentimes been at odds with religion, and especially Islam, coming to terms with a divine language and its worldly application, has necessitated a critique of a secular utopia which confines religion and a religious utopia to the space of the "other." Talal

Asad's and Bruno Latour's work on modernity, secularism, religion have been exceptionally helpful in working through intellectual quagmires. For when the secular liberalism of western academia meets a distinctly religious society such as that of Qatar, reflections on several conflicting visions of utopia are necessary: the religious, the secular and that of the physical space of real time. What becomes important then and what is actually always important, is who is involved in defining utopia and how individuals understand their own reflections. For me, that has meant recognizing that all things are inherently contingent upon reality, especially the desire for perfection.

In the case of a study of language, the utopian vision of language is one in which mono-lingualism predominates. But the reality is that for most of humanity's history, linguistic pluralism has been the norm. The rise of the secular nation-state has made mono-lingualism a defining element of creating a successful national identity. But in the history of Arab and Muslim societies, the civic realm of life existed in tandem with the religious realm, rather than the former subjugating the latter or vice versa. What became clear to me, in my search for Arabic, was that several linguistic and social visions could exist simultaneously, especially in highly multilingual societies. Was this made possible by religion or obstructed by it? I began to wonder if Arabic had some intriguing element which elided it from the utopian vision of language supported and spread by European nationalist ideals. Could the utopian vision of religious language support a type of language plurality that secular utopian visions of language struggle with? In exploring the role of Arabic in the making of Qatari society, I recognized a dissonance between various ideals and realities which had their roots in education, religion, culture

and politics. In a utopian world, all languages would be equal or humanity would only speak one language, but in reality, languages take on various values based on the power and privilege of its speakers. These activities and discussions are the heart of this ethnography, whose simple goal is to illustrate the ways in which Arabic becomes a different thing for different people, and makes (im)possible a range of actions and beliefs. Religion, along with culture, education and politics all play a part in indexing language use and making it work for people's needs. The reflections in the mirror of Qataris and non-Qataris, performing and telling a story of Arabic in Qatar are what follow in these pages. My own positionality vis-à-vis these reflections should be understood as one of not an objective observer, but a conscientious scholar-practitioner, who views language as a fascinating mirror of human behavior and belief, including my own. This brings me back to my own search for Arabic, one which continues today in the teaching of Arabic, along with Bangla, to my two daughters. Learning multiple languages, one of which gives access to a religious tradition, requires reflection on various elements of language, power and society. It requires recognition that, while a language may give access to individuals, books, ideas and cultures, it cannot teach them how to live. That takes the ability to analyze and reflect on what, where and how to use language to reach your desired goals. Language is a conduit and a conductor of life, constantly redefining us and redefined by our use of it.

Introduction : Strange Language or Language Strangers?

“Stranger in my own land” by Mimi, translated by R.Asmi

<p>Stranger in my own land I see that people don't understand my words Their garments do not cover their flaws And their glances follow me like a plague I speak to them in Arabic And they respond to me in a foreign tongue And they laugh all around me and say: “uneducated” But... am I not in an Arab country?... To where should I turn? To the West which sees me as backwards? Or to the people who see me as a rebel? To who... to where, my country?</p>	<p>غريبٌ في بلادي أرى أناس لا يفهمون كلامي ملابسهم لا تخفي عيوبهم و نظراتهم تلاحقني كالطاعون أحدثهم بالعربية و يرُدُّون علي بالفرنسية و يضحك من حولي ويقول: غير متعلمة ولكن .. ألسنٌ في بلاد عربية؟ إلى من الجأ؟ إلى الغريب الذي يراني متخلفة أم إلى الناس التي تراني متمردة إلى من .. إلى أين يا بلادي؟</p>
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Written by a popular Qatari blogger who writes under the penname Mimi, the above excerpt of her poem describes the Qatari landscape as one mired in conflict and uncertainty. Mimi refers to a sense of estrangement at the very beginning of the poem with the words, “stranger in my own land,” and returns to this feeling at the very end, “to who, to where.... my country.”² In between, she explores why she feels displaced

² <http://mimizwords.wordpress.com/2010/11/08/غريب-في-بلادي/> . The poem is published in Arabic, but most of the comments are in English, many of which appear to be from young Qataris like herself. Mimi says about herself that she traveled abroad for her studies and now has returned to find herself stifled by a conservative culture. Writing is her only medium of expression where “I aim to share my thoughts- things I could not share with others because they would have thought me even more different than they suspected.”

and not at home in Qatar.³ To untangle this poem, one requires some context to Mimi and to Qatar. Mimi is a Qatari citizen who, at the time of writing, has recently finished her undergraduate degree in the United Kingdom.⁴ She writes about herself:

As a Qatari women who has lived abroad and returned to life in a conservative society, writing is my way of remaining true to my own thoughts and dreams. In this Blog, I aim to share my thoughts- things I could not share with others because they have thought me even more *different* than they suspected (About Mimi).

The word *ghareeb*, which means strange or stranger, is used to begin her poem and its synonym, *different*, is used in her introduction. Mimi feels out of sorts and out of place in Qatar. Why? What has changed? Mimi acknowledges that she has changed after her study abroad, but her poem implies that Qatar has also changed.

The poem begins with disaffection over the language Mimi wants to use and the tropes which arise because of her use of it. She notes, with frustration, that when she goes to speak Arabic, she finds people responding to her in English and calling her uneducated. This part of the poem reflects the shifting educational and linguistic scene in Qatar and ends with the rhetorical question, “am I not in an Arab country?” Mimi ends her poem also with a question of belonging, or lack thereof. She finds herself

Although bilingual, Mimi chooses to post mostly in English because her readership is comprised mainly of expatriates and Qataris who were or currently are educated in English language schools.

³ The entire poem focuses on issues ranging from Qatar’s wealth to internal discrimination and prejudice among Qataris.

⁴ Mimi also contributed to a volume of short stories called *Qatar Narratives* in which she shares her experiences as a woman growing up in “modern” times verses that of the time of her mother and grandmother. She is grateful that she has the opportunity to study abroad and be independent and struggles against the unequal treatment she receives, as compared to her brother, because she is a female. She wants to fight for the rights of women in Qatar.

stranded between “the west which sees me as backwards” and “the people who see me as a rebel.” In her final words, “to who, to where... my country,” Mimi evokes a feeling of alienation and displacement.

This study explores whether Mimi and others like her, including myself, who operate at the boundaries of multiple languages are using a *strange language* or are *language strangers*. Does our meta-pragmatic awareness or reflexivity about our language use, when placed in the mirror of another language, result in a dislocation of the language itself, the individual in the society or both? These questions arose out of my own experiences with Arabic, as a strange language, and a language stranger (to Arabic) while doing field work in Qatar amidst a school reform movement. Mimi and I are both reflecting on the question of whether we are the language strangers and is Arabic becoming strange because of our reflection in the mirror of another language (English) and culture (the west)?

The sparks of this ethnographic story started in 2005 when I was a teacher at a British school in Qatar. I was hired because I was an American citizen, who had two years prior teaching experience in American public schools, to teach a class of kindergarten students who were primarily Qatari, the British KG2 English curriculum. During my year at the Gulf English School, I became intrigued by the relationship between the English teachers, western expatriates like myself, the Arabic teachers, expatriates from different Arab countries, and the Qatari population of students and families we interacted with on a daily basis. I began to ask myself how all these people came to be together in Qatar and how our relationships were mediated by the various

languages we spoke and the institutional languages that were imposed upon us. This experience made me wonder what reflections of language were being seen by these individuals and how we could make sense of these differences within the context of a “globalized” Qatari population.

I became further intrigued when I read Haeri’s 2003 book *Sacred Language, Ordinary People* about Arabic in Egypt, I began to think about the implications of what she proposed in a place like Qatar. Haeri argues that:

As the language of religious rituals, Classical Arabic has an integral place in the daily lives of believers who find it utterly beautiful, soothing and powerful (as do in fact many nonbelievers). It is when the language is taken out of the realm of religion that its status becomes ambiguous and its politicization difficult to prevent...The far greater share of the burden is on those who wish to use the language of religion for creating a world where religion is not supposed to occupy a central place. [2003:156-157]

Haeri’s argument is built upon the idea of vernacularization as coinciding with modernity and the development of a national imagination (Anderson 1981), a process that occurred historically through the production of the secular nation-state. She contends that because “Classical Arabic” is tied to religion, Egyptians act as “custodians” of this dialect of Arabic, while they are “owners” of Egyptian Arabic. Central to Haeri’s argument is “the realm of religion,” one which she argues is unwelcome in “a world where religion is not supposed to occupy a central place” (2003:157).⁵

⁵ Haeri calls *fusha* Classical Arabic and doesn’t give credence to the existence of a Standard Arabic, whether Modern or Classical. This is an important point of distinction between Haeri and other sociolinguists. Haeri chooses to subsume Standard Arabic under an all encompassing Classical Arabic because it supports her argument that Egyptian Arabic speakers are overwhelmed by the ideology of the

Haeri makes several assumptions about Egyptian society that depend upon the binary of secular and religious societies and the tenuous relationship the “secular” and the “religious” have to language.⁶ She conflates the concepts of vernacularization and secularization and does not attend to their ethnographic authority in the lives of her interlocutors. While Haeri critiques the language ideologies that consider Classical Arabic “sacred”, she fails to do the same for the language ideologies that posit various languages as “modern tongues” and “the soul of the people,” both ideologies critical to the formation of secular nationalist thought (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Bonfiglio 2010).⁷

Haeri would argue that Mimi’s feelings of strangeness arise not as a result of her inability to use Arabic in a population that is increasingly trying to acquire the English language, but because her own native Arabic suffers from a condition she calls “discontemporaneity” (2003: 150) in which Classical Arabic is stifling the “native” language of the Qatari, which is a spoken variant of Arabic typical to the region(s). This discontempoarenty has also been called “diglossia” by western linguists studying Arabic. While my findings concur with Haeri’s findings on several fronts, including the respect given to the Qur’an as a model of Arabic language, I would like to posit that there is a substantial problem with Haeri’s argument arising from her effort to supplant the Arabic speaker’s own meta-pragmatic awareness of language with that of a

“sacred” and therefore, are unable to be “contemporary,” as they would be if they developed their dialects into a written language.

⁶ aeri’s analysis of Arabic has been critiqued by several scholars for not attending fully to poststructuralist thought (Caton 2006), for holding rigidly to a Saussueran view of language as arbitrary (Miller 2008) and for reducing Arabic to the diglossic binary of classical versus spoken Arabic (Suleiman 2011). I

⁷ Bauman and Briggs (2003) deal extensively with the divergent positions of scholars critical to the emergence of national languages in Europe and Great Britain.

theoretical model in which the vernacular *should* supercede the religious script (as the romance languages did to Latin).

In my own reading of the language ideology literature, I have come to a different understanding of how one studies “language ideologies,” especially in multilingual contexts with diverse political and social histories. In doing so, I have drawn upon the work of Michael Silverstein (1979) who defines “language ideologies” as “a set of beliefs about language articulated by speakers as a rationalization and justification of perceived language use and structure” (193).⁸ In addition, Kathryn Woolard distinguishes language ideologies “as a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk” (1994:55). I contend that language ideologies are a way of describing how individuals and groups form enduring notions of what language does and how it should be used. It is a dialogical process in which speakers use language to talk about language (meta-language), which then results in language ideologies that shape how language is used. While a language ideology is a very useful way to study language, I also attend to Bruno Latour’s critique that:

We have to resist pretending that actors have only a language while the analyst possesses the meta-language in which the first is ‘embedded.’ As I said earlier, analysts are allowed to only possess some infra-language whose role is simply to

⁸ This approach to language studies has yielded several volumes and branches, ranging from historical studies of language ideology to national and institutional levels and regional and local language studies, which has historically been the bread and butter of anthropological linguistics (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Errington 2001; Gal 1979; Kroskity 1993). Of particular interest to a study of Arabic language ideology are the work of scholars who have written about language contact and variation, dominant or standard language ideology and its relationship with the nation and religious or “ritual” use of language (Asad 1981; Bauman and Briggs 2003; Blommaert 1994a; Errington 2008; Haeri 2003; Hoffman 2008; Silverstein 1998).

help them become attentive to the actors own fully developed meta-language, a reflexive account of what they are saying. [Latour 2005:49]

I would apply this critique of Latour's to Haeri's work because she disregards the "fully developed meta-language" of those who support Standard/Classical Arabic and places her meta-language of vernacularization and the "ushering in of modernity" at the heart of her argument (Haeri 2003: 146-147). In the process, she places language ideologies that are popular in western contexts and within academia in a position of superiority to those of her interlocutors. Rather than explicating an "infra-language" somewhere between that of her informants' meta-language and that of her fellow theorists' meta-language, Haeri focuses on how problematic Classical Arabic is for Egyptians from a theoretical point of view that privileges the secular, thus judging their reflexive awareness as incomplete according to the meta-language of academia.

I would like to expand upon Latour's notion of infra-language as a useful analytic tool for understanding and mediating language in multi-lingual communities. I struggled with applying the traditional anthropological approach towards Qatari culture, one which would deem certain things "Qatari" and others as "non-Qatari." If I took that approach, then I would be an intermediary between Qatari "culture" and academia, representing the habits, customs and language of Qataris as uniform and with strict boundaries. Instead, mediating an infra-language has meant that I opened up my ethnography to the myriad of languages actually used in Qatar by Qataris. It has also meant attending to what happens when there is more than one medium of translation (Arabic and English).

As I mentioned, these questions of linguistic metapragmatic awareness regarding multiple languages arose out of a particular experience of teaching English in a Qatari British school where speakers of many dialects of Arabic and speakers of many dialects of English came together to formally teach and learn Standard Arabic and Standard English. They did so also within the context of religious and cross-cultural differences. In this ethnography, I follow the implementation of the Qatari state's education reform measures to demonstrate how multiple languages are coming in contact with one another in Qatar and what role schools and religious discourse play in the process. In particular, I focus on the response of Arabs to the growing use of English, in its many forms, in Qatar and how it affects internal discussion about variation in Arabic. Throughout this study, I explore what happens when languages are mirrored and multiple language ideologies compete, collide and collate with one another. I argue that while language ideologies do exist, speakers are not unaware of them to the extent that linguists believe. This argument is supported by my data that shows individuals reflecting upon multiple languages and their historical and contemporary relevance to their lives. While there is a movement to codify certain languages as only capable of certain linguistic functions, there is always a reverse movement to contest this codification.

Silverstein (1998) identifies two communities of language that illustrate how fluid and rigid boundaries between languages can be. The first is the concept of the language community, which is defined as the normative denotational code used to structure language use. Then there is the "speech community" in which "perduring,

presupposable regularities of discursive interaction in a group or population” are used to define identity and belonging (1998: 407). Where grammar and structure are essential to delineating the language community, speakers in a speech community are not required to attend to grammar and syntax to communicate. Speech communities are composed of various members of a language community and are highly pluri- or multi-lingual. These two concepts allow us to think about language boundaries and they allow us to think about what happens when individuals move across these boundaries as plurilingual speakers. Throughout this ethnography, I will be moving between the speech community, predominantly in homes and informal conversations, and the language community, focused on in schools and formal settings. In doing so, I illustrate how speakers move from language as denotational code and language as identity and belonging. I posit that through these movements, speakers are always engaged in “language games” (Wittgenstein 2009), through which “language much speak for itself” (Wittgenstein 1979: 40).

The idea that “language must speak for itself” in “language games” allows the language user to construct and build new ways of communicating across the speech and language communities. In the mirroring of strange languages and language strangers, we discover that we are playing “language games” (Wittgenstein 2009) at all levels of linguistic analysis. This game gets even more complex when crossing the boundaries and borders of language. I want to connect this back to metapragmatics of language in a multi-lingual community. When an individual in Qatar goes to speak, they often have at their disposal more than one language, and even if they do not, they begin a simple

language game with the person they are trying to communicate with. Thus person A, a Qatari citizen, will say in English, “Give me two chicken” to the attendant at the KFC, a Filipino expatriate, who might respond, “You want Number 2 meal?” The Qatari might look perplexed at the confusing board above the attendant and reply, “Yes, number 2.” These types of exchanges occur on a daily basis in cafeterias, offices, schools, homes and streets of Qatar as individuals work out what language to use, if they are using it “correctly” and in the end, hopefully successfully getting their idea across.

In my field site, where English, Standard Arabic and regional dialects of Arabic are all used within speech and language communities, languages move against, in between and with one another. This, I would like to suggest, is the case in most communities, regardless of whether the language community is highly standardized. Historically, when looking at non-western languages, scholars have attended closely to denotational code and linguistic interactions in mono-lingual contexts (Silverstein 1999). They have looked for ways to homogenize language or to see which language *should* be used for denotational code in the community. In this study, multi-lingualism is normative and necessary for communication in the Qatari language and speech communities.

My focus in this study is on outlining an infra-language, somewhere in between my own meta-pragmatic accounting of meta-language (the ways we talk about language) and my interlocutors accounting of their own language use (meta-pragmatic awareness). In the following story of schools and languages in Qatar, I have found that

language speakers are constantly defining and redefining what languages to use and questioning the boundaries that language places upon their interactions and movements in Qatari society. Whether individuals are “correctly” assessing their language use is not the goal of this ethnography. I argue that language users make specific language choices to navigate the matrix of linguistic possibilities available to them in the speech and language community. They do so with a meta-pragmatic awareness that must be respected by the ethnographer.

Contextualizing Multilingualism in Qatar: Globalization, Regional Politics and the Knowledge Economy

To study Arabic in Qatar is to observe how languages flourish in a petri dish to which one adds (a little haphazardly) many different chemicals and nutrients. It is arguably one of the most rapidly “globalizing” places in the world today. The population of Qatar in 2012 reached 1.7 million, of which only 15% are national citizens. The leaders of this small state have tried to create regional and international alliances that will fuel positive change in the country. The vision of Qatar’s leadership is for a revival, one rooted in economic growth and religious faith. But Qataris and their regional neighbors stand at a crossroads in which turmoil and revolution are redefining the boundaries of the Middle East.

The Qatari leadership is exploring how to take their small state and their regional neighbors into the next century with their National Vision 2030 (Qatar Strategic Development 2000). The government has invested in brokering peace in conflict ridden

areas such as Lebanon and has supported revolutions in Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Syria. In addition, it has tried to support economic and political development through educational reform measures and providing scholarships and opportunities to Arabs throughout the region and at home in Qatar. This is apart of what the state's leaders call the "knowledge economy," which connects education, economics and politics through policies popular in international development circles. A concept found in business, economic and development circles, it refers to an economy that is based on knowledge and which directs its efforts towards research, technology and building infrastructure (schools) that supply the needed "knowledge" to run the economy (Drucker 1969; Chen and Dahlman 2005).

This new vision for the country had its beginnings in 1995, when the current Emir, Sheikh Hamad, and his wife, Sheikha Mozah, began an effort to reform Qatari politics, society and education, making one of the core tenets of reform that change must begin with the "development" of Qatari youth. The government's natural resources in oil and gas have allowed it to transport resources, human and non-human, into the country at enormous rates; elite universities, school specialists, consultants, technology, curriculum, theory and pedagogy from the best institutes in the West (primarily from the United States, but also Great Britain, Europe, Canada and Australia).

To achieve this paradigm, the Emir decreed the creation of Qatar Foundation and his wife, Sheikha Mozah, became its director (Emiri Decree 1995). Sheika Mozah began enlisting several American universities and corporations to come and aid in the

development of Education City and in the reform of the government's K-12 education.

In 2000, Sheikha Mozah asked the RAND Policy institute, an American consulting agency, to do a study of K-12 schools. RAND offered three options for reform to the government; 1) Reform the current Ministry system; 2) Adopt a free market model in which new independent, charter schools would thrive or fail based on competition; and 3) Completely privatize the schooling system by adopting vouchers. The leaders of the reform chose option two and have followed the implementation plan as outlined by the analysts (Brewer et. al 2005).

"Education for a New Era" was the catchphrase for these multiple, inter-related changes to the K-12 schooling infrastructure of Qatari society. Following the recommendations of RAND, existing government schools were slowly closed down and new independent schools, based on a charter school model, were opened up between 2000 and 2010. Although ostensibly about government's role in education, the reforms target the way that Arabic is taught in schools. RAND-Qatar Policy Institute's 2004 report on Qatar's school system recommends that Arabic teaching be removed of its "unnecessary" grammar and heavy usage of religious texts. Instead, Arabic teachers are encouraged to teach "practical" language skills and to create newer texts and methods of teaching Arabic to students. The analysts inform us that in order to create the Arabic standards, they "looked at the way English was taught as a first language in English speaking countries to draw parallels" (2005:102). The reform's writers explicate that the Arabic standards writing process was difficult because of the language's ties to religion, recommending that "a clear, but sensitive distinction between the teaching of

religion as a separate subject and the teaching of Arabic needed to be spelled out in the standards document” (Brewer et al. 2005: 104). The distinction between teaching religion and teaching English maybe patent in the United States, but it is much more complicated when turning to the history, teaching, practice and use of Arabic.

The implementation of a “knowledge economy” has prioritized English and produced debates about the direction of Qatar and its linguistic and religious character in popular media, newspapers and blogs. The relationship between American consulting firms and the Qatari government has created “close encounters” (Tsing 2000) that bring together much more than contemporary companies, individuals and financial markets.⁹ They also reference and integrate genealogies and ideologies of language and religion from the region and from North America and Europe.

The following chapters look at these “close encounters” from different vantage points in Qatari society. Following a history of Qatar in chapter 1, chapter 2 focuses on the Qatari state and school reform. In interviews with individuals about the Qatari state’s decision to move towards using Standard English in schools and private sector jobs, speakers of both English and Arabic feel the increasing tension of juxtaposing these two languages. Standard English begins to take on an ideology of a “global” language and in the process, it becomes “de-localized” and represented as a “modern”, ideal language. In contrast, Standard Arabic is rooted in the language of nationalism, ethnic

⁹ “Close encounters” is defined by Anna Tsing as a “focus on the historical specificity of the events that resulted in alliance and the open-ended in-determinacy of the regional processes stimulated by that alliance” (2000: 349). In addition, these encounters should be studied for elements of collaboration, misunderstanding and dialogue.

pride and religious discourse. Chapter 3 is focused on literacy in Standard Arabic and Standard English. In interviews with school teachers, metapragmatic awareness includes the notion of social literacies, that particular languages have more value in society than others. In chapter 4, literacy in Standard Arabic at the university level is increasingly becoming a subject of concern for Arabic teachers because of the rise in English language literacy amongst Qataris. In addition, the divergence between dialects of Arabic and the Standard is highlighted by teachers and students as a unique challenge to learning and teaching Standard Arabic. Chapter 6 continues to look at the language community, but through metapragmatic debates about what type of Arabic to use in Qatari society. This chapter returns us full circle to questions of language ideologies in multi-lingual settings and how to develop an infra-language that is respectful of speakers own meta-pragmatic awareness. The conclusion contends with the issues brought up throughout the ethnography and the value of actor-network theory in exploring complex, multi-lingual environments.

Theories of Globality and Locality: Actor Networks and Close Encounters

The “West” and “East” are making their way into Qatar, in the form of objects, people and languages. This “localizing of the global” in Doha, the capital of Qatar, is often referred to as “globalization.” But this term, as both Anna Tsing (2000) and Bruno Latour (2009) argue, often elides the tangible qualities of global movements and their localized realities. Latour (2005) has offered an alternative to studying the social world as consisting of binaries (structure/agency, local/global, nature/society) and simple

global flows with his actor-network theory. I was very drawn to Latour's actor-network theory (ANT) because it describes the work of the ethnographer:

An actor-network is traced whenever, in the course of a study, the decision is made to replace actors of whatever size by local and connected sites instead of ranking them into micro and macro. The two parts are essential, hence the hyphen. The first part (the actor) reveals the narrow space in which all of the grandiose ingredients of the world begin to be hatched; the second part (the network) may explain through which vehicles, which traces, which trails, which types of information, the world is being brought inside those places and then, after having been transformed there, are being pumped back out of its narrow walls (Latour 2006: 175)

In applying ANT, I have studied my field site as infinitely connected in many different directions to "local" and "global" sites. I have also taken away distinctions in theoretical research between the academic and the subject of study, connecting their meta-languages and attempting to find the infra-language, the mediating link between what theoreticians say about language and what my interlocutors are saying about their language use. Anna Tsing's (2000) views on globalization mirror that of Latour's and are particularly helpful in understanding how "close encounters" between English and Arabic can be better understood through localized accounting.

Tsing brings a critical eye to globalization studies, one that was previously applied to modernization studies, in which the process is understood as a series of "projects" rather than a period of great "remaking" (2000: 3). Tsing uses the image of a creek, which not only connects and flows, but creates channels and new trajectories to describe globalization. Tsing wants to take the aura away from the term globalization and vague descriptions of it as "circulation" and "flow" and replace it with concepts of "scale making", "definitional struggles", "close encounters" and "concrete trajectories

and movements.”¹⁰ The latter terms designate localized ethnography that can critique global projects, like their modernization cousins, for “discursive specificities of development, which often thrived more through the coherence of its internal logic than through any insight into the social situations in which it was expected to intervene” (2000: 329). Tsing argues that social engagements and interactions can and should continue to be scaled up as opposed to being projected from a “global” view that is actually dependent upon “concrete trajectories and movements”.

Both Tsing and Latour are suspicious of the grand narratives of modernity and globalization and posit in their place a more systematic accounting of activity which is rooted in real-time. Latour emphasizes the work of anthropologists who have taken the lead in studying specific social spaces and sites and the *oligos* (small, tad, wee) of social life. Similar to Garfinkel’s (1967) ethnomethodology, which takes social facts and studies them as they are understood by social actors, Latour argues that following the social and studying social actors as they interact in their worlds allows the social scientists to remove the aura surrounding the event (2005).¹¹

¹⁰ Tsing (2000) defines these concepts towards the end of her article “The Global Situation.” Concrete trajectories places the focus on social mobilization and following the how one item gets moved from one place to another while attending to how this affects identities and interests. Scale making is questioning the assumption of largesse associated with the term “global” and attempting instead to find how the idea of global or local is given its scale. Definitional struggles deals with redefining cultural frameworks as they come into contact: “Every globalization project is shaped from somewhat unpredictable interactions among specific cultural legacies” (349).

¹¹ Much of Latour’s theory is based on an early investigation in which he, along with a colleague, observed the processes of a scientific lab and deconstructed the activity within to demonstrate how dependent the lab and its inhabitants were on the society and economy in which they were embedded (Latour and Woolgar 1979). They furthermore argued that science is not made up of an entirely deductive and rational methodology, but requires relative decision making on the part of scientists to decide which directions to pursue and romanticized narratives of how conclusions and findings are arrived at.

In this study, “projects” of globalization and modernization can be observed through educational “projects”, which are defined by Bartlett (2010) as “cultural and sociopolitical initiatives accomplished by alliances of social actors, including actors in institutions, with different material resources, who engage and mobilize a variety of ideologies as codified in pedagogies and educational philosophies” (52). The educational project of the “knowledge economy” in Qatar coordinates political, institutional and financial resources from many parts of the world to generate conflicting ideologies of language in Qatar. This creates two idealized paths for Qataris: the first through “international” languages and schools and the second through a local and cultural understanding of language rooted in religion, Pan-Arab and Qatari nationalism. These two pathways each have their own language ideologies: the former connecting English to a “global” and “international standard” of education and literacy and the latter connecting Arabic to religious tradition and Qatari culture.

Language Ideologies, Nationalism and Speech Communities

The affiliation between language and nationalism, which was most famously outlined by Anderson (1991), is of an imagined community that grows out of the confluence of vernaculars becoming print mediums that are able to create a sense of community. While Anderson extended this theory and applied it to Indonesia and other post-colonial states, the notion of an imagined community in historically hybrid linguistic and religious communities was not quite as applicable as the European context from which it emerged. Anderson’s theory of the imagined community has been

critiqued by many, including Partha Chatterjee (1998)¹² and Michael Silverstein (2000), for assuming the uniformity of the imagined community at any given time. The latter two scholars argue that the construction of language unity is simply that, a construction touted by a polity that has amassed enough solidarity (not always in numbers) to represent their language as the language of an otherwise normally heterogeneous speech community. In an analysis of Anderson's "imagined community" based on one language, Silverstein argues:

Anderson seems to mistake the dialectically produced trope of "we"-ness for the reality. He seems not to see that the dialectical workings of political processes that construct the sharable space of realist reportage in standardized language are the facts to be characterized and explained. [1980:126]

In a similar vein, Chatterjee (1999) argues that Anderson's trouble lies in his focus on utopian vision of the "homogenous capital of time" into which individuals write and produce the nation. I see in Silverstein's and Chatterjee's writings a parallel line of reasoning, one which emphasizes local heterogeneous spaces.

Silverstein (1998) advocates studying language ideologies as the relationships between local and global languages, with an eye to the anthropologist's own biases regarding language and culture. From an understanding of locality as produced through contrast with globality, Silverstein draws a distinction between the speech community

¹² Chatterjee (1993) also offers a compelling argument in the juxtaposition of the post-colonial state with its colonial forefather. The post-colonial state arises out of a conversation and a contrasting with the colonial nation-state, highly cognizant of the disparities and hierarchies that existed and continue to exist between the colonizer and the colonized. Perhaps distinct physical entities at present, the post-colonial state and the former colonial power have shared histories that continue to be in conversation with one another.

and the language community, urging anthropologists to pay greater attention to the diversity of language practices within the speech community. Where the borders of the language community are regularly created out of denotational code, in contrast, the speech community is normatively plurilingual and “is the context of emergence, sustenance and transformation of distinct local language communities” (1998:407). Silverstein goes on to critique anthropologists and linguists for too eagerly defining the limits of local language communities and often times ignoring local “schemata” for organizing language practices. I utilize Silverstein’s distinction between language and speech communities to explain how Qatari Arabic, *fusha* and English each can be “emblems” of “users’ positions in shifting field of identities”(Silverstein 199: 144).

Chatterjee and Silverstein both recognize that the nation is constructed out of local struggles and that the national language is often the winner of a battle between many languages. Why is this relevant to a discussion of Arabic? Rather than take vernacularization and secularization, which coincided in Europe as a model for Qatar, I ask what currents are flowing in Arabic speech and language communities. Within the Arabic speech community in Qatar, there are multiple dialects of Arabic and English, but preference is given to *fusha* in the language community and increasingly to English in schools. The coming together of these language varieties requires in depth analysis of these languages and the relationships they have had historically to ideas of religion and the secular.

Genealogies of Religion and Discursive Traditions of Islam

The writings of Talal Asad (1986; 1993; 2003) on religion and the secular-modern can be read in tandem with Chatterjee's works on the post-colonial state. Asad has been critical of the ways in which colonialism and western dominance in the 20th century has affected societies in non-western countries. His early work criticized the role of anthropologists in the colonial project and his most recent work focuses on Islam and secularism. Asad (1986) has been highly influential in the anthropological study of Islam by opening up lines of inquiry which challenge the conceptual framework and boundaries of the "modern" secular state and in arguing that Islam should be studied as a "discursive tradition." By applying Foucault's genealogical method, Asad (2003) unravels the tapestry of secularism which has tried to represent a universal "modern" world and subject. In its place, he argues for a grasp of "its peculiar historicity, the mobile powers that have constructed its structures, projects and desires" and he suggests that "religion, in its negative and positive senses, is an essential part of that construction" (1993:24).

Essential to this undertaking is the analysis of discourse and discursive traditions, both secular and religious in origin. Asad has drawn from MacIntyre (1988) and Taylor (2007) to argue that the secular is constructed partially in its control and definition of religion. That it is not simply a separation of church and state, but "a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in

which it is understood to be one option among many others, and frequently, not the easiest to embrace “ (Taylor 2007: 2). Taylor signals out Muslim societies as cases in which this process has not yet occurred.

Asad (1993) agrees with Chatterjee’s notion of heterogeneous time and guards against the idea of homogenous time. He argues that secularism attempts to transcend pluralities or “multiple temporalities” through the homogenous capital of time and that liberal nations are invested in equality of representation while “religious communities belong, strictly speaking, to civil and not to political society—that is, to the private domain, where difference is permitted” (Asad 1993: 272). In analyzing Asad’s body of work, the theme of discursive tradition emerges in both his writings on secularism and on religion. Asad argues against an anthropology of religion in which religion is treated as a system of symbols and signs which can be interpreted only by the ethnographer. In this vein, anthropology of Islam should focus on the conversations, relationships and shifts between Muslims as they draw from a set of foundational texts, such as the Qur’an, Hadith and their offshoots of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) to constitute their practices.

Anthropologists studying religious societies should observe and understand what constitutes religion as a body of authoritative discourse. While Foucault’s genealogy focused on ruptures or fissures, as defining motifs of change, Asad focuses on gradual movement and translation of words and ideas throughout history. Religion and secularism are then not separate entities, one handing the baton to the next, but rather able to feed off one another and grow simultaneously in societies. I adapt Asad’s

discursive tradition to study the process by which Arabs and Muslims affirm their belief in God by connecting with the discursive tradition, through fusha, while simultaneously also recognizing the pressure to adopt secular patterns of thought and political rule. One of the major pathways for this “secularization” in Qatar is through education and school reform, which was historically a site of religious education.

In a study of the Islamic textual tradition, Messick’s (1991) historical ethnography provides thick description (Geertz 1972) of the ways in which “modernity”, in the form of nation-state building, affected the religious elite and scholars in Yemen. Religious scholars in Yemen had to contend with ideologies of language in oral and written forms, as Messick states:

A culturally specific paradox informed the grounding of spoken words in written texts. From the recording of Revelation to the documentation of property rights, attempts to inscribe original speech, considered authentic and true, resulted in textual versions of diminished authority. The other side of the paradox was that speech events were fleeting and evanescent. Despite the staggering retential capacities of human memories, the spoken word needed the services of writing to endure [Messick 1991: 252]

Messick demonstrates how Yemen’s education and legal system operated prior to the encroachment of colonialism in the Muslim world. He argues that Yemen, under the “calligraphic state,” was able to function outside the “structures of the world system,” but was then slowly integrated into it through Ottoman and British intervention (253). These changes are visually shown through images of documents prior to and after state formation which display a transition from a style of calligraphic writing which was handwritten, individualized and circular in directionality to documents written in straight lines, printed type and signed with the government stamp, instead of the

personal seal of the caliph. These changes are paralleled in the eclipsing of western forms of schooling which replaced study circles with straight chairs and desks, individual chalkboards with one central blackboard and individualized and peer learning with teacher centered education.

Messick's ethnographic work is relevant to this study for several reasons. He illustrates how orality and literacy co-existed in Muslim societies and in the religious discursive traditions of Yemeni Zaidi scholars. He also shows how western forms of knowledge and authority, in particular through literacy and print, shifted the ways this scholarly tradition had to re-authorize themselves through a different medium of communication, reducing their local authority to gain authority in the new nationalist imaginary. This is relevant to the Qatari context because Islam was previously the realm of a select group of scholars with access to literary Arabic, but with the rise of nationalism, Arabic literacy becomes important to nationalist visions. This places the religious scholar, who gains legitimacy through access to the fusha of literary tradition, in competition with the citizen/subject of the new Arab nation states and also with the "international" Arab who is literate in English.

Despite the growing debates about Arabic literacy, Arabic still holds immense authority in the oral and aural realms of language use, where the "mother" tongue is idealized. Hirshkind's (2006) study supports the argument that Egyptian Muslims, through habits of listening to oral speech, learn how to structure their language and debate in an Islamic counterpublic. The "Islamic counterpublic" actively sees itself as

debating and contending with discourses of secularity. Muslims are taught how to structure their arguments against secularism through Islamic speech habits, bodily rituals and religious discourses. The textual tradition of Islam is secondary to a soundscape of Islamic sermons, music and oral discourse and debate about how to comport oneself as a Muslim in societies that increasingly frame citizenship and belong as connected primarily to the secular modern nation state.

Saba Mahmoud (2005) has a similar argument to that of Hirschkind regarding agency in the context of Muslim women's piety movements in Egypt. Muslim women in Egypt see themselves as agentic selves because they actively conform to God's religious prescriptions in their daily lives. Although they engage and read texts, these women primarily engage in dialogue and discussion about how to apply the text to their lives. Texts are again secondary to engaging in oral discourse and debate about how Muslims should embody Islam's tenants. Mahmoud's work is an example of trying to create an infra-language between interlocutor and academic. She does not subsume the Muslim women she interacted with under the rubric of western agency, but re-appraises western discourses of agency in light of the meta-pragmatic speech of her informants regarding their religious practices. Mahmood posits that "conditions of secular-liberal modernity are such that for any world-making project (spiritual or otherwise) to succeed and be effective, it must engage with the all-encompassing institutions and structures of modern governance, whether it aspires to state power or not" (2005:194). One of these structures of modern governance is schooling, which Ramirez and Boli (1987) argue was

a project intricately tied to nationalism. Education is often reduced to schooling, an interchange that anthropologists of education work against.

Anthropology of Education

Varenne (2007) has argued that culture is education and education is culture and efforts to reduce it to schooling should be opposed. “Arguably, anthropology should claim education along with culture as its core concepts to the extent that one cannot hope to understand cultural evolution without also understanding education” (Varenne 2007:17).¹³ Cultural evolution is not the evolution of more advanced cultures, but what Varenne calls “difficult collective deliberations” (2007:1). Difficult collective deliberations arise out of attempts to go from ignorance to knowledge and then back to ignorance again. It is not simply about learning or the transmission of knowledge, but about processes and interactions between individuals and communities as they talk about what is important and worthy of learning. These deliberations can be studied in actor-networks (Latour 2005) and communities of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991). Varenne also shuns reductive efforts to understand the “consciousness” of

¹³ Varenne’s theories of education trace learning, unlearning and ignorance in schools churches and homes (1986; 1992; 1998). Varenne has written about communication as an essential aspect of learning, and in doing so, has turned the focus in education away from the “success” or “failure” of students to a focus on interaction within the classroom and throughout the school and larger society. This is most clear in his work with Ray McDermott on what he terms, “successful failure”, which is what occurs as a result of the American school system’s focus on testing and finding fault with schools and students (Varenne and McDermott: 1999). He argues that what we communicate, through our words, behaviors and actions, to children in American schools, is the idea that they are being judged through an a priori standard of success and failure. Children, teachers and parents begin to see education in black and white terms and turn the focus from the process of “collective deliberation” to one of reductive representations of education in the form of test scores and “successful” and “failed” students.

people, instead focusing on their discourses, actions and interactions. In the same essay quoted above, Varenne argues: “Anthropology, if it has to have any punch, must be the activity that fosters the sense that the world we all experience is a cultured world constructed in a contingent history that has made something totally concrete” (2008:1). The reference to the concrete is the belief that there are still things that anthropologists can study, observe and comment upon as “culture,” found in the social activities of individuals and groups. This theory of education coincides well with a theory of language ideologies that studies metapragmatics of language and infra-languages. It also dovetails well with a study of religion as an evolving discursive tradition that arises out of contestation and deliberation.

Another anthropological approach to education can be found in the work of Lesley Bartlett. Bartlett’s (2002; 2007; 2010) work critically analyses social constructions of inequality based on language, class and race. In her work on Brazil, Bartlett (2010) uses the idea of the “educational project” to explore how Freire’s pedagogy of critical literacy can benefit from New Literacy Studies (NLS)¹⁴ and also how NLS can benefit from critical approaches found in race, gender and class studies. Gee (1999) defined NLS as “the idea that reading, writing and meaning are always situated within specific social practices and within specific discourses” (189). In critiquing and extending NLS, Bartlett “urges literacy scholars and practitioners to remain aware of the ways in which thinking about, teaching and practicing or performing literacy entails cultural politics,

¹⁴ New Literacy Studies is an approach to studying language that focuses on social and political aspects of literacy and oral forms of language. Scholars such as Brian Street (1998), Shirley Brice Heath (1983) and James Gee (1995) are considered early pioneers of this approach.

and to continuously reflect and revise our literacy practices” (2010: 11). This is practical advice to scholars studying how literacy ideologies emerge through a focus on “cultural politics,” or the ways in which people assign difference through ethnicity, race, gender and language. Bartlett’s work on educational projects and on marketization of education will be useful to understanding how the “knowledge economy” project engages in cultural politics of representation. Her critique and extension of NLS is applicable to instances where literacy ideologies shift power and increasingly privilege English over Arabic. Literacy theorists would benefit from an understanding of how language ideologies operate in multi-lingual settings. While literacy can be studied directly, it is beneficial to understand how literacy in a language correlates with the language ideologies it is associated with.

Providing a foil to the “glittering, empty” shell of Qatar

The pace of urbanization and development in Qatar has occurred so rapidly that analysts often stick to generalizations and harsh critiques of the country’s “modernization” methods, although these methods are usually taken straight out of the handbooks and models of western countries. Several New York Times and Wall Street Journal pieces have labeled the country a “glittering, empty shell”, which takes the best from all over the world, but has nothing of substance at home to offer in return (Hartvig 2012; Hossenally 2012; Shadid 2011; Slackman 2010; Tutton 2010). The general conclusion is that Qatar’s ambitions far outweigh its capacity: in borrowing from other countries, whether it is brand names, art work, businesses or human capital, the country

is compensating for a lack of potential on the part of its population. Having lived in Qatar on and off since 2005, I take the view that despite its size, Qatar's government and citizens have huge ambitions that should not be ignored or underestimated. Furthermore, they have the financial resources to bring the newest and most innovative technologies and minds to the country, but are struggling to define the boundaries of their national and political identities. This is an arena in which Qataris, and their oil rich Gulf neighbors, also receive a great deal of criticism.

The most recent anthropological literature on the Gulf region focuses on the conflicts that arise in defining the boundaries of Gulf national citizenship through the exclusion of South Asian laborers and other expatriates (Gardner 2010; Kanna 2011; Vora 2008). The region is also a popular subject among political scientists who have explored the transition from merchants and sheikhdoms to political statehood (Crystal 1995; Fromhaerz 2010; Onley 2007; Zahlan 1989). These studies have explored the strategic changes made in the move from small polities to states with economic influence, but have left a lacuna in questions of language, schooling and religion.

To the criticism that Qatar is a "glittering, empty shell", my study provides a foil; that of the internal debates and discussions occurring in Qatar's public sphere regarding language, Islam and schooling. This ethnography illustrates that while Qatar has a lot of wealth and is brandishing it, this does not automatically preclude the state and its' citizens from a long and rich tradition of orality and literacy, found in both Qatari Arabic and *fusha*. I argue that to reduce Qataris down to their "glittering oil wealth" is to ignore

their rich traditions, experiences and connections to various economies and political societies in the region today and in the past. It bespeaks a desire to delegitimize Qataris simply because they are “*nouveau riche*.”

This is not to ignore the very important questions and problems that have arisen as a result of rapid growth, which include but are not limited to the immense expatriate labor force and exploitation of the working and labor classes in Qatar, the erosion and wasting of resources such as water and land, the rise of a consumer culture which has resulted in obesity and major health problems such as diabetes, and the creation of a welfare state that makes working in the private sector unappealing. While research on these measures is necessary and important, I have chosen to focus in this study on how Qataris are narrating the changes that are occurring in the country through questions about language and the ideologies that are attached to them. Qataris and the expatriates who work and live in their country are engaged in “collective deliberations” (Varenne 2007), which is learning and unlearning in a particular context through praxis, about whom and what to include in the narrating and building of Qatari state. This requires utilizing and questioning various languages, the ideologies that are built around them, and the physical infrastructure that supports them.

I see my contributions to the anthropology of the Middle East and anthropology of education in answering the following questions: What are Qatari individuals doing, saying, and thinking amidst the growing changes to the landscape and population of their country and what languages are they using to have these conversation? What are

Qataris drawing upon, besides oil, to build and imagine their schools, economies and national citizenship? How can these projects give us insight into questions of language, “the nation” and schooling? Qatar and the region as a whole is an important future plain of study because of the many elements through which *bricolage* can be conducted. It is an intellectually rich arena for exploring how different traditions can potentially be brought together or divided.

Methods of Movement

آهل مكة أدرى بشعارها

The people of Makkah are the most knowledgeable of their streets. – Arab proverb

My methodology is based on George Marcus’s (1995) concept of multi-sited ethnography. Lila Abu-Lughod (2005) employs Marcus’s methods to write her “ethnography of the nation,” which she calls “mobile ethnography” and describes as “doing ethnographies of ‘life-worlds’ in several locations- not haphazardly, but with the intention of revealing the connections among them as a logic of larger systems within which particular lives unfold” (2005:20). In my field research, I take Latour’s notion of the actor-network and Abu-Lughod’s “mobile ethnography” as models. In doing so, I focused on several sites and points that were connected with one another because of the movement of people and things from one location to another. I positioned myself in these sites and collected data from actors about their networks and the languages they used to navigate them. How did they learn about things? Who did they interact with? What information were they sharing and exchanging? I took Latour’s suggestion to ignore scale in the beginning of my field work and to pay attention to where the activity

was strongest. This meant, like an ant, I had to follow the trail and find where the centers were. This led me immediately to my primary field sites: Qatar Foundation, Education City and Qatar University. I collected data from individuals who worked, lived and were connected to these sites. I was able enter people's homes and expand my research to schools and sites outside of these spaces, but these two were my most consistent research sites.

My data were collected over a period of 14 months during which I lived in housing provided by Qatar Foundation and Georgetown University in Qatar and in housing provided by Qatar University. I combined the use of traditional ethnographic techniques such as observations and interviews with media, technology, newspaper articles, policy and performance (poetry, videos, shows, speeches). My observational data come from my daily engagements with Georgetown University in Qatar and Qatar University, their staff, workers, teachers and students along with my personal interactions with neighbors and friends in my social networks. This included participation and attendance at conferences, classes, graduation ceremonies, special events and parties. A secondary source of data gathered from these sites was their communiqués, both public and private, which I gathered through working with various department heads in both universities. In formal interviews with elementary school teachers, university professors and students, I gathered data regarding these individuals' perceptions of the changing educational and political movements in the country, on Arabic language use in Qatar and on the growing influence and use of English in many sectors of Qatari society. I also actively collected literature from the

offices of Qatar Foundation and the Supreme Education Council which I analyzed regularly for their use of Arabic and English. I read Qatari news in Arabic and English and watched Qatari national television, the news corporation Al-Jazeera and their channels for children, Baraem and JCC Children. I visited several of Qatar Foundation's projects which hoped to develop Arabic language and Islamic culture, such as Baraem children's channel, Al Jazeera Arabic and English, Qatar Islamic Art Museum, the Doha Tribeca Film Festival, the Heritage Library, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, the Sheikha Mozah Center for Qur'an Memorization and several other programs and institutions. A typical day in Doha would consist of 4-5 hours at Georgetown University or Qatar University in the morning followed by afternoons spent with friends from various nationalities and linguistic backgrounds or reviewing news and developments in the educational and political scene. Interviews were conducted through the snowballing technique as access to spaces in Doha can be limited based on who you know.

Through snowballing, I was able to interview several key players in Doha's language story, that of policymakers, teachers and students. In 2005, when I first lived in Doha, I was a teacher at the Gulf English School and made many contacts with teachers which I revived when I returned in 2007 for field work. In the summer of 2007, I focused on policymakers in Doha's education reform movement, interviewing individuals at RAND Corporation, Qatar Foundation, Georgetown University and Qatar University. These individuals shared with me how the reform had shifted the linguistic scene in Doha, bringing in thousands of expatriates every day and changing the public schools language of instruction from Arabic to English. During 2005 to 2007, there

continued to be problems and complaints from the national population regarding the increase in non-Qataris and in the changing linguistic and cultural scene. There were complaints from Qataris about the dress and disrespectful behavior of expatriates, while expatriates looked down upon Qataris for their treatment of labor workers, nannies and household servants. Language was and continued to be a huge area of contestation in the public media between these different populations.

From 2009-2010, my field research shifted to teachers and students, although I still met with and spoke with policymakers. My focus was on Arabic teachers who taught at the high school and university level because they were involved daily with change to Arabic language education as a result of the new project of the “knowledge economy.” They were personally affected by education reform and the resulting marginalization of Arabic. I had several Arabic tutors who became my interlocutors as I researched language issues in Doha. The primary interlocutor was Ikhlas, a Syrian national who was born and raised in Doha and had received her Arabic degree from Qatar University.¹⁵ Ikhlas and I spent long hours talking about Qatar, its’ schools and language in Doha. My second interlocutor was Noorah, a teacher at Qatar University, and a Qatari national who had impeccable command of Standard Arabic. We spent many hours discussing the merits of Qatar’s education reform and the interactions between Qataris and expatriates in Doha. In addition, I formed a strong connection with several groups of Arabic teachers in Qatar Foundation’s Education City and at Qatar

¹⁵ All names have been changed to protect the privacy of my informants. Qatar is a very small state and many individuals might be easily recognized if their names are not changed.

University. These individuals were important sources of information about Arabic, Qatar and university policies and politics. In addition, I interviewed over 20 Arabic teachers at high schools, both public and private, throughout Doha. Students were my secondary source of interview information, but a primary source of observational data. I mainly observed students at Georgetown University in Qatar and at Qatar University. I watched them in coffee shops, in classes and in malls. This group of individuals was mainly composed of Qatari nationals, although there were several expatriates from Pakistan, America, Canada, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and several other nations who I interviewed and spoke to.

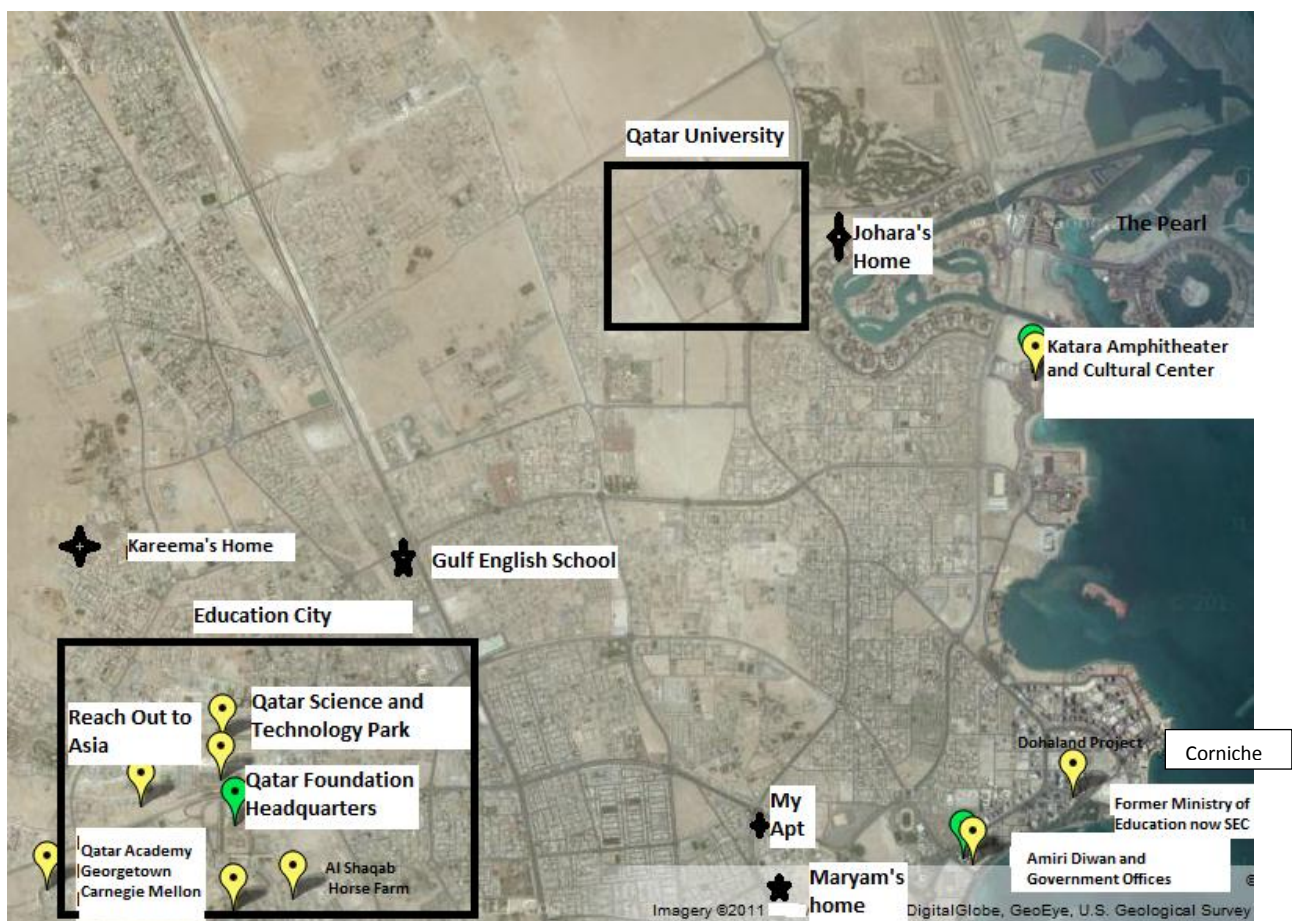
In addition to individual observation and interviews, I did an extensive amount of research on media content about Arabic. As Arabic is often at its most expressive in the oral arena, these forums were places where the discussion of language, Qatar and Arab and Muslim society were at its most heated. The role of Al-Jazeera in Qatar, along with the growing media empire of Qatar Foundation in the form of children's programming and debate shows, were rich sources of information about language ideologies. The individuals on these programs were from all parts of the Arab diaspora and therefore did not represent Qatar or Qataris, although many have claimed that Al-Jazeera is a part of the Emir's political media machine. These mediums are important across the actor-network because they channel and reflect the views of segments of the Arabic speaking community.

In addition, I interacted with the expatriate community in Qatar extensively, which includes Americans, Bangladeshis, Indians, Britons and many others. I also had several interlocutors, mainly women, who were heavily involved in community schools either as teachers, students or policy makers. These individuals' experiences are not systematically reflected in the following pages as I focus primarily on language ideologies associated with Arabic and English. While Qataris historically had strong ties with South Asian communities through trade and labor, today the focus is on interaction and trade with western and "developed" states as the leadership of Qatar wants to have a "world class" education system. South Asian economies and their citizens are perceived as inferior and are given lower salaries and less prestige in Qatar's economic and schooling institutions. In contrast, expatriates from Western states are given higher salaries and are respected more because they speak the Queen's English. These social and class hierarchies are explored in depth in Vora (2008), Kanna (2010) and Gardner (2010), but the linguistic elements of this inequality are important subjects of future research.

By tracing and elaborating the places where connections are being made, anthropologists can focus on the social as it is being produced rather than attending to predefined scales of "global", "local" or to predefined discourses of "standard", "colloquial" or "classical." In regards to language, this requires studying the speech and language community and the ways in which individuals talk about their own language practices and behaviors. In the following map, I highlight some of the places of field work and the sites where I could observe the speech community. It is a mixture of

institutions (Education City, Qatar Foundation and Qatar University), homes (Ikhlas's home, Johara's home, Maryam's home and my own home) and social and cultural sites of interaction and performance (The Corniche, The Pearl, Katara). My mobile ethnography kept me moving between sites of the speech community (homes, hallways, coffee shops) and the language community (classrooms, conferences, debates). The map does not include the schools I visited, but they were all throughout the city and reflected both private and public schooling options for Qataris.

A Map of Me in the City



Limits of the Limitless

With a methodological apparatus such as actor-network theory, a field site with marked plurality in language use and a host of other issues, it was my recurring challenge to stay focused on the question of language in Qatar. Doha, the capital of Qatar, is small enough that one might feel that ethnography of the city could be within one's reach, although it is not. The networks with which it interacts are too numerous to count and they are expanding on a daily basis. The access to technology and the proliferation of activity on the ground, on the internet and in the media is remarkable. I chose multi-sited ethnography and actor-network theory specifically for their flexibility. They allowed me to observe and interact with the creation of a knowledge economy, an inter(nation)al image and local individuals positions vis-à-vis these changes. But this methodology has its limitations, primarily in its expansiveness. As my scope was broad enough to catch media coverage, literature and publications, speech and interaction, I was aware of the limits of the limitless.

Actor-network theory is a theoretical apparatus that emphasizes ethnographic inquiry, but does not allow one to focus inquiry in one space. This creates a push and pull between the ethnographer's design of an excellent research project and the erratic and unpredictable movements that the ethnographer is asked to follow. ANT is similar to DeCerteau's (1984) "walking the city," where rather than peering from the top of a skyscraper, one walks in the footsteps of city dweller and observes how they make the

city anew. When one walks the city of Doha, you find buildings demolished, streets emerging out of debris and people from all over the world speaking many different languages. To follow their trails and see linguistic interaction from their perspective is a gargantuan task. Doing this type of ethnography requires one to impose limits on oneself and to acknowledge that there are things we may not know and places we may not go. Thus, one of the major limitations self-imposed by ANT, is the acknowledgement that we only know what we can experience first-hand.

There were many places I could not be physically: closed door meetings, invitation only events, schools that were too far away or that I did not have the time to visit. In my efforts to capture a movement, I was inevitably always stuck in one place and in one moment. There were other practical limitations. These included being a wife, mother and pregnant woman during my fieldwork. I tried to turn these limitations into research related activities. My responsibilities to my three year old daughter required that I spend time exploring pre-schools and watching Arabic children's television. I made sure to ask these programs about their policy on language and to talk to her teachers and the administration about the changes in Doha in regards to language. As a pregnant woman, I observed first-hand how private medical facilities in Doha operate primarily in English. Watching a Qatari woman struggle to explain her needs to a Filipina nurse allowed me to understand Qatari frustrations from a different perspective. Experiences such as these filled the spaces between participant observation at universities and in classes and interviews with individuals involved in Qatar's education and "knowledge" economy.

I am also limited in what I can say about specific schools in Doha. Although I was a teacher in a British school in 2005, this was prior to the creation of my research proposal. I used this prior connection to interview and get in touch with former colleagues, students and parents, but it was not the same experience as that of being in a school on a daily basis. In my choice not to spend the majority of my time in the classroom, I cannot speak comprehensively about curriculum, pedagogy or teacher-student-faculty interactions at the elementary school level. I can only glean from interviews with teachers and students from these levels of schooling what these interactions might have looked like. Thus this ethnography is not of a particular place or people in Qatar, but rather of multiple actors and actants involved in the production of language ideologies in Qatar.

Organization of the Study

Language ideologies are layered, just like stories. They evolve from local contexts and the juxtaposition of one language against another. In order to relay ethnography of mobile languages and their ideologies, I have structured this study to reflect this complexity. I have used the model of *A Thousand and One Nights*, a tale set in Persia that was originally orally shared and then collected into a book. This is similar to ethnographic accounting, where anthropologists collect stories of their interlocutors and of themselves in the fieldsite, to be later collated in the written form of the ethnography.

In organizing my ethnography around storytelling, I recognize that the stories of my interlocutors are lessons, parables and rationales that should guide me, the anthropologist- to make the best representations of them (Asad 1986; Clifford and Marcus 1986). In each subsequent chapter, I tell stories of conflict and debate between various tribes of storytellers. Those that were collected through ethnographic fieldwork are given the titles of *hizwi*, which is the name for a story in Qatari Arabic. Instead of using the Standard Arabic word for story, which is *qisa* or *hikaya*, I choose to use *hizwi* because it conveys the oral setting it was produced in. In each chapter, I create a dialogical back and forth through narratives of my interlocutors and academics who have worked on the anthropology of education, globalization, religion and language. As this ethnography is set in a relatively new urban city with a long history of oral storytelling, this model is ideal for explaining the intricacies of a story with several layers.

By focusing on debates and discussions within both the language and speech community, I demonstrate the resonance of various ideologies of language to emerging notions of Qatari citizenship. The Qatari citizen is being asked to be both Qatari and international, but the latter identity is increasingly tied to English. This creates a conundrum for Qataris, who have an allegiance to both Qatari Arabic and fusha. I argue that the metapragmatic accounting and stories told in my ethnography reflect a desire to hold onto the flexibility that Arabic affords through a focus on the oral speech community, but that this is becoming increasingly difficult in a context where English

literacy is idealized and supported by the Qatari leaderships desire to build a
“knowledge economy.”

Chapter 1: “A Qatari” and “A Global Citizen”

“In Qatar, we hope to inspire such self confidence in our citizens. We envision that every Qatari will perceive himself as both a Qatari and as a global citizen.” -Sheikha Mozah

Visitors and even long-term residents in the cities of the Arab Gulf commonly, and accurately, comment that most of the people they meet in the course of their visit are not in fact from the Gulf. A visitor to Qatar’s capital, Doha, is likely to be assisted at the airport by a Nepalese luggage handler, driven to their hotel by a Yemeni taxi driver, greeted by an Indian front-desk clerk and checked into a room prepared by a Sri Lankan housekeeper ...Schools, too, have been established for the children of foreign residents teaching the curriculum of the home country [Nagy 2006: 1]

The above quotes illustrate two types of narratives about the increasingly diverse populations residing in Doha, the capital of Qatar, and the national citizens of the state. The first narrative is representative of the Qatari ruling family’s national and global vision in which the Qatari citizen is being encouraged by their leaders to become active in their country and in the “global” community. The second narrative is from the perspective of Sharon Nagy, an American anthropologist and non-Qatari, and highlights the “labor” many non-Qataris do and the segregation of Qataris from the expatriate community. Each of these narratives places the Qatari Arab in relationship to the “globe”, its language of English, and the diverse inhabitants now living in Doha. In order to understand these varied representations, it is useful to relate the changes to the city and its inhabitants, the political and economic structures of rule and the ways in which institutions and individuals have interacted with these changes.

In part one of this chapter, I outline the geographic, demographic, political and educational history of Qatar. While historical accounts in English by non-Qataris

connect the rise of the Al-Thani family with the power of oil and relationships with imperial powers such as Britain and the Ottomans, accounts in Arabic, by Qataris, emphasize the ways in which the Al-Thani family unified tribes in Qatar against these outside empires to establish the Qatari state. Following these historical narratives, I outline the demographic changes to the country and the rise in the population of non-Qataris. I focus on schools and language as an important for exploring changes to the city and to the state. In order to illustrate how important schools and “education” have become to outlining Qatar’s new vision, I share the narrative of Qatar’s leading lady, Sheikha Mozah, on the vision for the country. The sources that Sheikha Mozah draws upon in her narrative of Qatar are important for several reasons. While they highlight importance of Islam and Qatari culture and traditions, they are more reliant on the discourse of international NGOs and their reports on the “progress” and “development” of the Middle East. While the Sheikha is at times critical of these reports and desires reconciliation between Islam and “modernity”, she sees the path to Qatar’s future as made by and through international standards and frameworks and acquisition of the “global” language of English.

I utilize Ahmed Kanna’s (2010) work on neighboring Dubai and the nationalist project he calls *Arabized neoliberalism* to analyze Qatar’s “knowledge economy” narrative. I argue that Qatar is slightly different from Dubai and therefore, requires local context. The historical outline of Qatar is often viewed through two different glasses, with western historians focusing on international dynamics and economic and political manipulation, while the Qatari leadership is focused on narrating and consolidating the

history and traditions of Qatar around both neoliberal frameworks and cultural and religious frameworks. I argue that Qatar's leadership is trying to find an intersection between neoliberal educational projects and cultural and religious discourses, but these efforts are unsuccessful because the neoliberal project of the knowledge economy undermines local knowledge. It also de-localizes English language education and certain private forms of schooling by labeling them as "international." This contextual background sets the stage for the "close encounters" between United States corporations and school reform in Qatar, the subject of chapters two and three.

From Tribes to National Citizens: Qatar from the 19th Century to Today



Figure 1: Doha Coastline circa 1937

Historical sources on Qatar are comprised of two types: accounts by British colonial administrators regarding their relationship with the tribes in the region comprising Qatar today and oral, and now increasingly written, accounts by Qataris themselves that are used to produce tribal histories and narrate the emergence of the nation. The emergence of the Qatari state's national vision coincides with the production of its history into a standard national imaginary, increasingly through print,

but also through the re-entextualization of oral accounts. As Shryock argues, “The tribal past, in the absence of standard texts, is continually reconstructed in speech. The reconstruction is quite accurate, but it is flexible as well” (1997:33). While Anderson’s thesis of print mediums producing the nation might hold true for many national histories, it should be complicated by the reality that print constructions originate out of contestations between several oral accounts and languages within the speech community. The print becomes the standard, but should be seen for what it is, a representation of unity, where diversity presides. There is a strong desire on the part of the current ruling family to connect the country to a rich and glorious past, one intimately connected to the ruling family of Al-Thani, through both oral and written accounts of their history. Simultaneously, in the narrative of Sheikha Mozah, Qataris can and should also draw upon the resources of the “globe”.

Historical Accounts of Qatar



Figure 2: Map of Qatar 2009



Figure 3: Qatar's position in the Persian Gulf

Qatar's geographical position along pilgrimage routes to Mecca and its participation in regional trade between Arabia and South Asia have ensured a history of diverse interests and individuals crossing the peninsula. A desert climate supported the Bedouin lifestyle until urbanization in port towns such as Doha, Zubara and Um Salata led to increasing movement of tribes and communities across Bahrain and Saudi Arabia who settled into what we consider Qatar today. Qatar is a very nascent state, having gained full independence from British protection only 40 years ago in 1971. The current ruling family of Al-Thani views the state's "modern" history as originating in the rule of its' ancestors in the 18th century, with Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad serving as a symbolic founder of the state because of his battle and defeat of Ottoman armies in 1893 (Amiri Diwan 2012).¹⁶ In references to the founding leaders of Qatar, many note

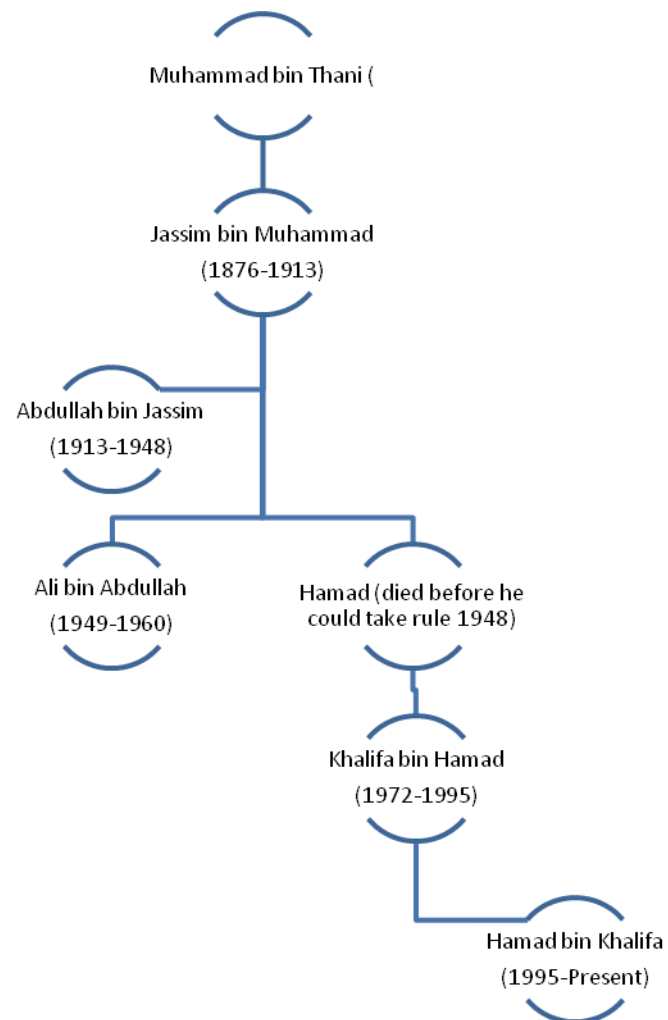
¹⁶ Qatar's engagement in the 19th with the Ottoman Empire was not a positive one, but did facilitate some of the developments in the early infrastructure of Qatar's educational establishments and teachers. The Ottoman desire to dominate the area led Jassim Al Thani to sign a treaty with the British to become one of the trucial territories. The Al-Thani exchanged oil rights and territorial concessions with the British for protection from its enemies by land and sea. This exchange ended in 1971, with a new set of relationships

their piety, support of Islamic education and the building of mosques throughout the region. In particular, Jassim bin Muhammad is noted for his writing of Arabic poetry and his delivering of *khutbas* (religious sermons) on Fridays.

The Al-Thani family's rule of Qatar resembles that of its neighbors in the region: United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain. Along with the Al-Thanis, several large tribal families had a significant presence in the region. Competition and fighting between these groups resulted in some of these families staying in Qatar and others leaving for Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Al-Khalifa, Bani-Utub, Al-Jalahima). The Al-Khalifas became the leaders of Bahrain when they left Qatar in 1783. Figure three provides a brief genealogy of the Al-Thani family, whose ancestors were said to have arrived in Qatar between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The following image is a genealogy connecting the Al-Thanis to other prominent tribal families in the region, in particular, the Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia. The family traces its political rule of Qatar back to Muhammad bin Thani, who was considered the "governor of Bedaa'", and was responsible for collecting revenue from pearling and fishing (Crystal 1995: 29).

emerging between Qatar and the United States, which is now a buffer against Saudi and Iranian interests in the state (Wright: 2007). The American army has the second largest military base in Doha that was used to launch air strikes against Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq in 2003. While American and British oil companies both have rights to drilling and working in Qatar, America has emerged as a more powerful ally and partner to the state in recent years.

Figure 4: Al-Thani Family Tree of Succession



Muhammad Al-Thani gained recognition from the British in the Treaty of 1968, following an attack by the al-Khalifa on Doha and Wakra and an answering attack by the tribes of Qatar on Bahrain. Crystal (1995) argues that “the treaty laid the juridical basis for Britain’s later acknowledgement of Qatar as an autonomous political unit and through recognition, gave special standing to the Al-Thani family, who would thereafter rule Qatar” (31).¹⁷ The British played an essential role in the formation of Gulf monarchies in Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates by acting as an internal buffer between the various leading tribal families and their competitors. They also physically contained the “house” of Ibn Saud in Saudi Arabia through their treaties with the tribal families of Al-Thani, Al-Sabah (in Kuwait), Al-Nahyan (Abu-Dhabi) and Al-Khalifa (in Bahrain) (Peterson 1991; Silverfarb 1982; Zahlan 1998). Peterson notes that “the rise of the British position more or less coincided with the emergence of certain tribes along the Gulf littoral” (1991:1444).

Following Muhammad bin Thani’s rule, his son Jassim was also able to use the British as a buffer against the Ottoman Empire and its interference in Qatar’s internal affairs. Jassim is lauded for his political craftsmanship in Qatari history and plays a prominent role in the celebration of Qatar National Day, a holiday established by the current Emir to celebrate

¹⁷ Crystal 1995 compares Kuwait and Qatar and finds that Kuwait’s leading family, the Sabahs, enjoyed strong internal family consensus and external support from other tribes to consolidate their position. The al-Sabah’s allowed other tribal families to pursue commerce while they took charge of governance. This led to a successful transfer of power through the Sabah family line for over four generations. In contrast, the Al-Thani family’s larger tribal commitments and their role as traders resulted in a series of contestations within the family that led to the overthrow or usurping of power of several of the tribe’s rulers (Abdulla- Ali-Khalifa-Hamad). The Al-Thanis were not able, as the Al-Sabah’s were, to balance political and economic power between merchants and the statesman. Crystal attributes this to a lack of distinct merchant class and the Al-Thani’s strong interests in trade from the early period. The Al-Thanis built strategic alliances through trade deals and marriage with several wealthy and influential merchant families, the Al-Attiyas and the Darwishes.

Qatar's founding. Qatar National Day coincides with the Qatari defeat, under Jassim, of the Ottomans, which marked territorial autonomy for the temporarily united Qatari tribes. In account by Ahmad Al Anani, he describes Jassim:

The key secret of Sheikh Jassem Bin Mohammad Al Thani's personality was his strong faith in God and the power of God, his courage when he felt his beliefs to be true and righteous and his extraordinary intelligence in evaluating situations. Thanks to him, and perhaps for the first time in several centuries, the State of Qatar is no longer just a trail and a grazing pasture for the tribes of the Eastern Arabian Peninsula, but a united country. [Anani 1984: 172]

There are several more accounts of Jassim as an exceptional political and religious leader, fighter, businessman and defender of "Qatar."¹⁸ None of them mention that Jassim dispersed the Indian merchants who lived in Doha to create a monopoly on trade, although this point is highlighted in British accounts (Crystal 1995: 31-32.) As mentioned above, Jassim's reign and the war against the Ottomans represent a major turning point in the narrative of Qatar's "modern" history. This narrative emphasizes the unification of tribes in Qatar against a common enemy (the Ottomans) and under the leadership of the Al-Thanis.

While the Ottoman power declined, British military power in the region continued to play an influential role in the region, especially as oil entered the picture. Britain's original involvement was largely due to its concern over the trade routes to India and the Indian Ocean. But when oil began to be discovered the region, Great Britain became more invested in stability of these emerging Gulf States. Crystal (1995) relates the process by which oil became a bargaining chip between Abdulla, Qassim's son and the ruler of Qatar when oil was discovered,

¹⁸ Qatar Museums Authority "Qatar National Day". <http://www.ndqatar.com/arabic/Qatar/Pages/About-Jasim.aspx>

and the British. This section illustrates the variety of interested parties in Qatar's oil supply, beginning with the British Foreign Office:

'The Foreign Office has made it very clear that they are anxious to walk very carefully in this part of the world, so as to avoid an oil war with American oil interests over what was on a long view a relatively unimportant area.' Saudia Arabia, aware of possible oil in Qatar, also took a new interest in the peninsula and its borders. In 1933 negotiations for a long-term concession occurred. Throughout the talks, the possibility of linking protection to concession recurred. In 1934 Britain offered Abdalla the first firm, if still qualified, protection: 'His Majesty's Government are prepared to give Shaikh a guarantee in respect of unprovoked aggression by land in return for grant by him of an Oil Concession to Anglo-Persian Oil Company... But are anxious to confine it to a major aggression, i.e. to an unprovoked attack by Ruler of a neighboring State and to major Bedoian raids. [Crystal 1995:116]

Through this treaty, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (APOC) acquired 75 years of exclusive oil rights.¹⁹ Although oil was first discovered in the Dukhan Fields in 1940 and production had begun by 1947, there was a lull created by World War II that resulted in severe economic hardship in the country. During this period, called the "years of hunger", many tribal families migrated to Saudi Arabia and neighboring Gulf States (Fromherz 2012). The Al-Thani family was protected by oil concessions from the British and was again able to consolidate their strong hold over the region in this period (Crystal 1995). The following decades of interaction between Britain and the Al-Thani family consisted of a partnership, based on the numerous treaties signed between the Al-Thani leaders and Great Britain's representatives in the region. Qatari and British renderings of this period focus on the oil concessions and mutual projects embarked upon by both groups. This history of trade relations had important ramifications for internal affairs and the region's oil workers and non-tribal, non-merchant families began to

¹⁹ The early form of the Qatar Petroleum Company (Petroleum Development Qatar Limited-PDQL) was also created at the same time. The PDQL would play an important role in the strikes that would ensue in Qatar and would later become Qatar Petroleum, the biggest contractor for oil in the country.

rebel against this alliance. This is particularly poignant during Ali's reign, when oil revenue increased.

Between 1950 and 1960, when oil finally began to produce revenue for the state, Abdulla's son Ali faced increasing demands from his family members for higher allowances and there were a number of revolts and strikes from those working for the oil companies against Ali's financial dealings with the British oil companies.²⁰ Various struggles took place between the lower classes of Qataris who worked in the oil fields with those of expatriates brought into work. These strikes led to an alliance between the merchant families and the Qatari labor classes, comprised of mainly Qatari slave holders and their slaves. By uniting around a Qatari identity, these latter groups combined in a nationalist move against the rule and influence of "outsiders", in particular the British. Ali and his son Ahmad dealt with this problem by cutting back allowances for the Al-Thani, distributing large sums of money to the working classes and giving government jobs to the merchant families. In the process, slaves were manumitted and given allowances. Ahmad disliked politics and increasingly removed himself from political affairs, vacationing often in Europe and Asia. All of these events led to increasing nationalist sentiment for independence from both Britain and coincided with the British decision to withdraw protectorate status from the Trucial States in 1971 (Qatar, UAE, Bahrain).

The transition from Ahmad to Khalifa was precipitated by the formers support of joining the newly formed United Arab Emirates and the latter's desire for independence. Khalifa was able to gain control of the country successfully by consolidating support of the Al-Thani family

²⁰ Shell, an American oil company, also gained rights during this decade for offshore oil exploration.

and by gaining the backing of Great Britain. Having observed the problems under Ali's rule, Khalifa embarked on a series of projects that focused on the emerging "national" population, while curbing the government's favors to the Al-Thani and the merchant families. Under Khalifa, a law was passed in 1971 that granted full citizenship to only those who were residing in Qatar prior to 1930. The period from 1970 to 1995, when Hamad would seize power from his father Khalifa, consisted of progressive improvements to the social services provided to the state's new citizens. This did not mean an end to tribal ties, as many government posts were filled with close relatives of Khalifa and the Al-Thani allies, Al-Attiya and Al-Mannai.

This period of growth in government services brought with it the expansion of bureaucracy and the population of expatriates. Al-Thani power and Qatari identity were consolidated through government welfare programs and distinctions between the increasing expatriate population being brought into work on the jobs that Qataris, through government subsidies and jobs, could now avoid (Fromherz 2012). Crystal ends her section on Qatar with what she sees as tensions emerging in the Qatari state: "It is hard to reconcile a monarchist ideology (for the ruler) with a capitalist ideology (for the merchants) with a social entitlement ideology (for the population). The tensions inherent in this process have not been resolved" (1995:164). This historical overview of political and economic forces in the creation of Qatar as a state should provide a rich background for the following sections on trends in these arenas during the most recent reign of Hamad, Khalifa's son. The ruling family, the expanding bureaucracy and private sector continue to play important roles in mediating the flow of resources to the state's citizens and inhabitants. These elements are also critical to understanding how the current leadership of Qatar is narrating the position of the state locally

and in the international arena. Furthermore, it is clear through these various historical accounts that those residing in Qatar have often rallied against what is perceived as unfair economic disbursement of oil wealth. What has emerged through these various struggles is the Al-Thani family's central role in ensuring that distribution is fair. If the ruling family is perceived of as unjust, revolts on the part of either internal Al-thani factions or a combination of merchant and tribal families is not uncommon. These threats have usually been assuaged through greater distribution of oil wealth. As Fromherz (2012) also argues, this strategy is in line with the tradition of tribal customs and the role of the Shaikh. What has changed over the last several decades is the numbers of non-Qataris in the state, creating a stronger feeling of "us" versus "them" in the internal politics of the state.

Qatar from 1970 to Today: Demographics and Development

Doha in the latter half of the 20th century developed at an astonishing rate with the port and skyline of the country slowly eclipsing its desert surroundings. Pictures presented below, in Figure 4, span from the 1970's to 2010 and demonstrate the drastic changes to the environment and landscape of the country. Hamad bin Khalifa has been even more inclined towards social and political reform than his father Khalifa and has embarked on a series of initiatives with the aid of his cousin the foreign minister, Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber, and his wife, Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al Missned. His vision for the country was consolidated in the Emiri Decision (44) in 2008 in the document, "Qatar National Vision 2030", which outlines four pillars of development: human, social, economic and environmental (General Secretariat for

Development Planning 2008). The path to the “first pillar to human development” is described in the following words:

Future economic success will increasingly depend on the ability of the Qatari people to deal with a new international order that is *knowledge-based* and extremely competitive. To meet the challenge, Qatar is establishing advanced educational and health systems, as well as increasing the effective participation of Qataris in the labor force. In addition, Qatar will continue to augment its labor force by attracting qualified expatriate workers in all fields. [GSDP 2008:13, emphasis mine]

The ways in which these new development goals have shaped the city are most visible in the demographics of the country and changes to educational infrastructure.



Figure 3: Doha in 1979 expansion of the city center, port, trade centers and administrative offices of the government



Figure 4: Doha in 2010, box represents city size shown in 1979 picture above



Figure 6: New Airport plans showing urban growth (Reads: As Doha catapults forward, the new airport affords an extraordinary opportunity to establish a new model for authentic, sustainable and socially responsible urban growth in the region)



Figure 5: A rendering of Future Doha by Artist Syd Mead

Figure 4: Photos of Qatar in Transition

In the most recent statistics published by the Qatari Statistics Authority, the population in 2011 has reached over 1.7 million, with males outnumbering females four to one, especially in the 15-64 year old range. This dramatic rise in male population is attributed to the “recruitment of large number of expatriate workers” (Statistics Authority 2011:5). The Qatari national population is said to be anywhere between 200 and 250 thousand, making them between 11-15 percent of the entire population, a minority in their own country. In addition, 99.3 percent of the private sector is manned by expatriate labor, with the majority of Qataris choosing to work in the more linguistically and culturally familiar realm of government agencies and companies. In the following table, I outline the estimated population increase of Qataris and non-Qataris from 1908 to 2010 that highlights the drastic increase within the past 20 years in the expatriate population. Figure 5 illustrates which areas of Qatar have seen the most growth.

Table 1: Population growth in Qatar from 1900s to today

Year	Total Population of Qatar	Non-Qataris	Qatari Population	Female Population	Male Population
1908	Est. 26,000	Est. 6,000	Est. 20,000		
1939	Est. 28,000	Est. 11,000	Est. 21,000		
1949	Est. 16,000		Est. 14,000		
1971	Est. 120,000	Est. 78,000	Est. 42,000		
1986 Census	369,079	Est. 250,000	Est. 119,079	121,227	247, 852
1997 Census	522,023	297,609 (Labor force)	224,414	179,564	342,459
2004 Census	744,029	466,046 (Labor force)	277,983	247,647	496,382

2008 Census	1,533,729	1,102,812		350,348	1,203,381
2010 Census	1,699,435	1,320,589	378,864	414,696	1,284,739

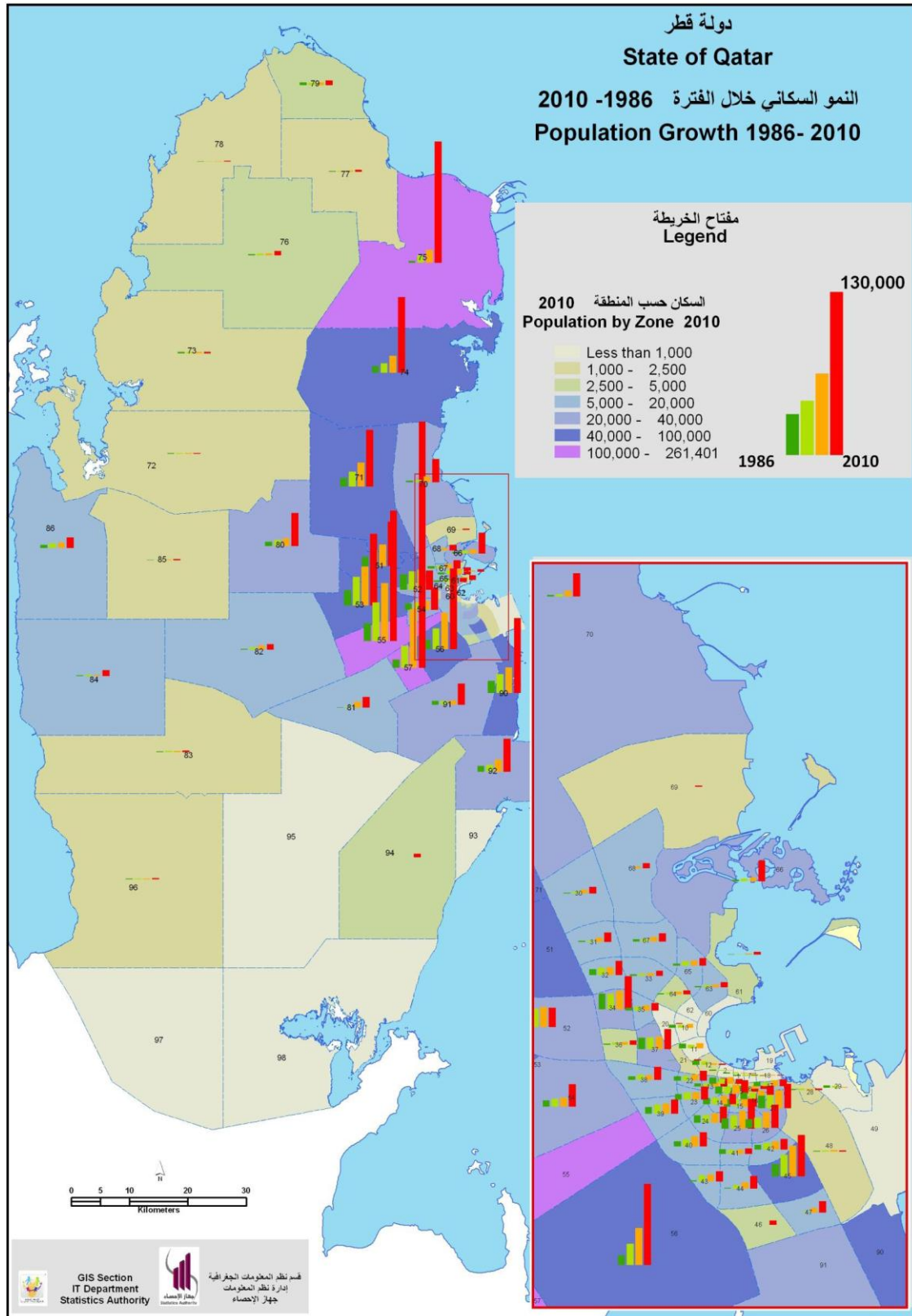


Figure 5: Population growth throughout Qatar

A clustering of Qataris versus non-Qataris occurs along the public/private divide. A majority of Qataris choose to work in the government sector, primarily in fields of public administration and education, while a minority works in private industry. This is important to understanding the current message of the leading family, one which is pushing Qataris to learn English and work increasingly in the private sector. It also explains the policy of “Qatarization” developed by the government in 2000 with a goal to increase the Qatari workforce in all sectors, public and private, to 50%. The policy is called *Quality Qatarization*, meaning they want “qualified” Qataris to take these jobs (Strategic Qatarization Plan).²¹ This is a controversial policy among expatriates as it often means they are not promoted or their job is given to less qualified Qataris in order to meet the percentage goals for Qataris in the workforce and in schools. Before turning to Sheikha Mozah’s narrative of Qatar’s future and its past, I want to briefly outline the history of schooling in the country and how demographic changes have affected schools and the languages they teach.

²¹ The following website helps Qataris to get jobs in the “energy and industry sector”
http://www.qatarization.com.qa/Qatarization/Qatarization.nsf/en_Index?Readform

History of Schooling in Qatar

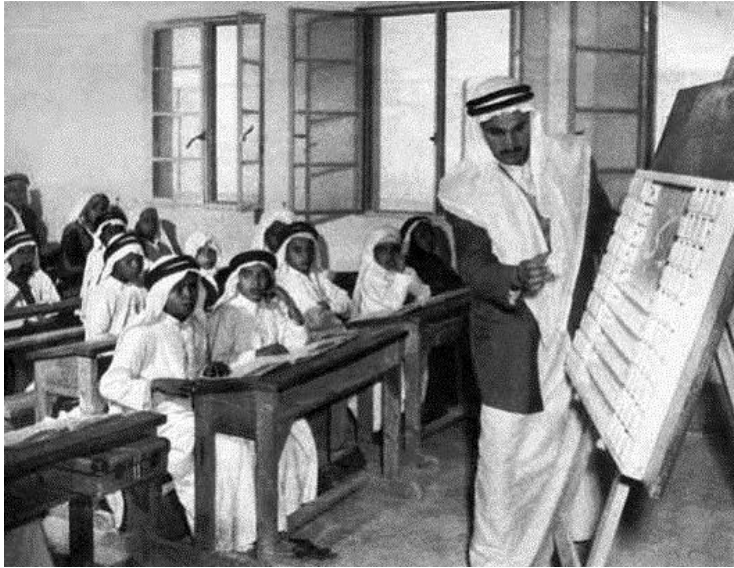


Figure 6: A classroom in the 1950's



Figure 7: Students in the 1970's

Qatar's history of schooling dates



Figure 8: Al-Islah School in 1959

back to the 1950's when the first schools were opened and supported by the patronage of the Emirs and also by individuals passionate about teaching (Al-Missned 1985; Sultan Al Umary 2004). These schools were the first places to teach formal writing and reading. The focus of these schools was religious instruction in reading the Arabic of the Qur'an. Within 10 years, the country had developed larger technical schools where multiple subjects

would be taught. Teachers and professionals from Egypt helped form the first educational system under the Ministry of Knowledge (*wizarat al ma'arif*) whose classes and textbooks were all in Arabic, save one class in English (Al-Missned 1984).



Figure 9: 1982, Ustadh Mamduoh Yousef and Ustadh Abdullah Abdur Raham Abdullah, Principal of Khaled al Waleed secondary school for boys. (Egyptian-Qatari school planning under the Ministry of Education and Upbringing)

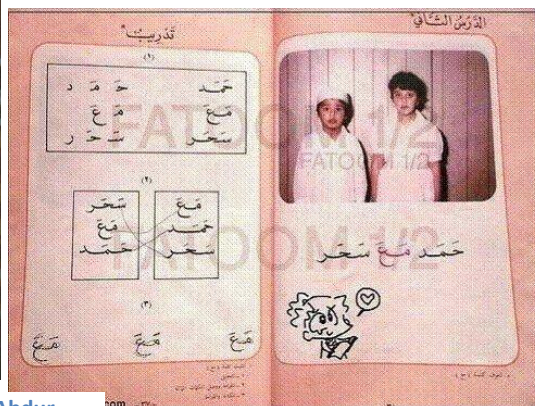


Figure 10: 1980's Qatari textbook with Hamada and Sahar

In the contemporary period, schooling has taken a dramatic shift with the “global” vision of Emir Hamad and Sheikha Mozah. In order to create the Qatari and global citizens the state envisions, the schooling system has shifted to focus on “international standards”. This led to the closing of the Ministry schools in the early 2000s. Under new leadership, new schools modeled off the American system of charter schools opened through 2005 and 2010. These public schools are now called Independent schools and teach English as a core subject and as the language of instruction in math and science. This movement from instruction in Arabic to English in these subjects hinges on students literacy in the latter. Historically, literacy has mainly been associated with Standard Arabic.

Table 2: “Literacy” Statistics in 1986

Year	1986 (Total Population)	1997 (Total Population)	1997 (Qataris age 10+)	2010 (Total Population)	2010 (Qataris age 10+)
"Illiterate"	65,655	65,093	14,016	54,578	7,583
Read/Write	81,402	118,304	20,787	367,085	23,287
Elementary School Education	42,200	55,768	19,679	348,708	28,497
"Preparatory" Education	36,533	57,629	17,024	206,443	30,859
"Secondary" Education	37,125	62,433	17,849	337,518	48,646
College	20,968	44,841	13,693	217,386	35,353

In Table 2 above, I gathered statistics from Qatar's Planning Council and census data on "illiteracy" and what is labeled as read/write, along with some numbers on who attend schools in Qatar. The general trend in the Qatar has been a reduction in "illiteracy" and an increase in the ability to read and write, coinciding with increased emphasis on elementary, preparatory and secondary education. The numbers of Qataris who attend college has also greatly increased. Qatari women far outnumber their male counterparts in attaining college degrees, but still face gender barriers in the workplace. It is important to note that when collecting these statistics, it is unclear what language individual "literacy" is being based on. Perhaps the assumption is that people can at least read and write in at least one language. The following table outlines statistics taken from Qatar's new school management body, the Supreme Education Council. Although 2009's statistics seem slightly off (perhaps a glitch in data collection), the remaining numbers show a decline in schools run by the former Ministry of Education (MOE) and a rise in the new "independent" schools. The last batch of MOE schools is called "semi-independent", their independence from what is unclear, as the MOE has been officially shut down and their website completely abolished.

Table 3: Schools in Qatar 2000-2010

Year	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009*	2010
Government Schools (MOE)	220	152	138	118	93	72 ("Semi-Independent")	77 ("Semi-Independent")
"Independent" Schools	0	40	52	70	89	108	170
"International"	ND	51	51	77	40	103	75
"Community"	ND				41	96	24

I want to focus on the names of these schools as an important way to understand the ways in which schools in Qatar are structured by demographics of nationality and language and a history of interaction with Great Britain, neighboring Gulf and Arab States and increasingly, the United States. The MOE schools were distinguished by their administration under the government and by primarily Qataris, with help from Arabs from regional Gulf States and a borrowing of the British model of education (primary, secondary, preparatory). These schools heavily emphasized Arabic, Islamic Studies and nationalism, with a few magnet "scientific" schools focusing more extensively on English, Math and Science, or what it is sometimes referred to as STEM education.

The new "independent" schools are a creation, as we will see in the next chapter, of a "close encounter" between Qatar's schools and an American consulting agency, RAND. "Community" schools refer to those that were opened by communities of expatriates and usually with a tie to the embassy and home country of the affiliated school. These schools usually adapt the curriculum of their home countries and run in various national languages, although many are predominantly English language schools. The last category of "international" schools, whose label I find most indicative of the connecting of English with the

“international” citizen, are usually run by British or American staff and administration and are known for providing education that will gain students entryway into American and British universities. These schools earn the title of “international” by catering to any and all nationalities of Qataris and expatriates.

For Qataris, schooling options now consist of the public “independent” schools and private English and Arabic schools. While the majority of Qataris still attend the Independent schools (primarily because of gender segregation), many wealthy Qataris have transitioned to sending their children to “international” schools, which are often believed to provide a better education than the newly reformed government schools. Another trend is the catering of private schools to Qatari interests. As we will see in Chapter Three, Qataris are sent to particular private schools that are run by the British or Americans, but have a Qatari owner or conform to the Qatari custom of gender segregation for boys and girls. Much of the changes to elementary school education are driven by changes to the higher education infrastructure in the country that is the subject of Chapter Five. Several American universities have been invited to set up satellite campuses in Doha and the public university has embarked on its own reforms designed to make the education in line with “international” standards. This has meant that the Qatari education system, in which instruction was solely in Arabic up until 15 years ago, is attempting to create a “world-class” education system that teaches and tests students primarily in English. This creates a conflict between the older model of government sponsored Arabic language education and schooling in the country with the new, primarily privatized English schools being opened in Qatar today. This tension is a product of Sheikha Mozah’s national

vision of the Qatari citizen who through education and the “knowledge economy,” can be a source of social awakening for not only Qatar, but the world.

Hazawi of Sheikha Mozah, the Knowledge Economy and an Arab Awakening

In Qatar, we believe education is not only the right of every citizen but also a pillar of a developed and just society. So, recognizing the power of education in stimulating a genuine cultural, social and political awakening, (*yakadhah*), Qatar began a series of educational reforms in 1995. The principals of collaboration, respect for others and popular participation have been the impetus to change in all levels of our educational structure from K-12 to post-secondary systems.

- Sheikha Mozah, Speech at the Oxford Center for Islamic Studies (March 18, 2005)

In Qatar, the development of Qatar’s knowledge economy is tangled with rhetoric about the revival of Arab and Islamic culture. Sheikha Mozah has become the spokesperson of Qatar’s development projects and argues that borrowing neoliberal models of education will spur a cultural awakening, or *yakhadah* (بِقْظَة). As head of Qatar Foundation, the largest non-governmental body in Qatar regulating everything from science, health, technology and education, she has directed millions of dollars of the state’s oil revenue toward inspiring an “awakening” in the region. The Sheikha’s role has blossomed in the last ten years, as she has moved from local educational and social projects to take on more high profile positions as the UNESCO’s Special Envoy for Basic and Higher Education and a member of the United Nation’s Alliance of Civilizations. She has given many speeches over the last few years at graduation ceremonies, conferences and various forums. In analyzing the content of these speeches, I found that the primary references she makes are to Islamic “traditions,” Arab Human development Reports and the writings of Arab intellectuals and western philosophers (see

Appendix 1). In drawing from these varied sources, she attempts to solidify her argument that a “knowledge economy” will support a cultural awakening.

Sheikha Mozah sees young Qataris and Arabs as the key to this future vision, individuals such as Mimi (from chapter one), who are receiving the “best” education the world has to offer. In addition, she feels that the country must change to accommodate these individuals new-found knowledge:

In the past, countries in our region sent students abroad to be educated. Upon their return, such citizens were often isolated from their societies, for they had acquired the education needed to analyze and participate in their societies, but their societies had not developed any mechanisms to accommodate the practice of citizenry. Such people either secluded themselves from others or returned abroad, initiating a process of brain drain in our region. In Qatar, we are bringing institutions to our region, rather than sending our people outside. [Al-Missned 2005: 13-14]

She continues on to suggest that what is missing in their home countries is a “culture of quality” which should be instilled “in the beliefs, values, institutions and behaviors of our citizens.”²² What Sheikha Mozah proposes as a solution to this problem of “brain drain” and lack of a “culture of quality” is the transfer of numerous “international” and “prestigious” institutions into Qatar. While she is very clear in her speeches, about the need for building upon “living traditions” in the region (i.e. Islam and Qatari/Arab culture), she has been elusive about the linguistic complexity that has arisen in the wake of the reforms the government has spearheaded, changes which have left individuals such as Mimi feeling estranged. The source

²² An article in the *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* by Woronov(2009) critiques China’s Culture of Quality initiatives for the confusion which it created among students, parents, teachers and administrators over the school years 2006-7 when efforts were made to cut down on homework in order to increase time devoted to enhancing children’s creativity and “quality”.

of these ideas about the knowledge economy and “education as panacea” stem from the Sheikha’s growing engagement with international organizations and private businesses, but she tries to temper this strong neoliberal message with religious language and cultural symbols, positing that what is happening in Qatar is a revival of Arabic-Islamic tradition.²³

During the early stages of education reforms in Qatar, Sheikha Mozah gave a speech at the opening of the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in which she explained the rationale behind the country’s plans for development: “The central theme driving our discussion today is the need for the global community to assume responsibility for reform and innovation in education in order to meet the challenges of globalization, democratization and knowledge based societies” (Al-Missned 2003: 5). She goes on to discuss how education must go hand in hand with a democratic society in order to create a “culture of quality,” which must also maintain “cultural integrity”. Thus, Qatar has initiated a reform in education in order to “face the demands of a knowledge based global economy” (Al-Missned 2003:8). She describes these changes in some detail; basic education at the primary level has been turned into a charter school model where competition, diversity of choice, parental participation and accountability are the driving principals. At the higher education level, the state university is undergoing “intense rejuvenation” and private “top quality universities” (from the U.S.) are opening up campuses in Qatar. She also emphasizes that Qatar has engaged in political reforms to encourage freedom of speech and has freed schools from state control.

²³ The concept of “education as panacea” is a part of the rhetoric of development institutions, but what it often conceals is the complicated relationship between education and the market, one which does not often produce the intended results (Vavrus 2003).

Towards the end of her speech, she argues that these reforms and changes should not be feared or considered alien to the country because “Islam requires critical thinking and constructive debate, and condemns misology. To revive the democratic values inherent in the fabric of our society is perfectly in tune with the critical requirement put on Muslims, who were ordered by Allah to reflect independently on knowledge” (11). Weaving back and forth between discourses of development and that of Muslim Modernists, the Sheikha hopes to connect the two as supporting a similar vision of a pluralistic, diverse and Arab society. The question of language is mentioned in one talk, which is actually the only talk given in Arabic, to a group of Arab scientists. The Sheikha says,

Hadn't Arabic, in those golden days, been the language of science and the medium of learning among the Greeks, Persian and Indian knowledge, and Latin, which became the language of science during the Renaissance? Today we have some concerns that our language, Arabic, would lose its time-honored status gained over the past several centuries. As you all know, languages reflect the value of what they offer to humanity. Any language can be likened to a vessel and/or a vehicle which transmits peoples' cultures and civilizations. Hence, languages may flourish with the progress of societies and fade away with their weakness. [Mozah 2006:4-5]

Sheikha Mozah mentions the concern that Arabic may lose its “status” and posits that the problem will only be resolved if Arab society flourishes and offers something of “value” to humanity. To provide support for this concept, she cites historical figures such as Harun Al Rashid, Ibn Khaldun, Rifa Al Tahtawi, Muhammad Abdu and Taha Hussain, each of whom she sees as being “open” to learning from other societies and cultures while proud in their Arab and Islamic culture. Throughout her speeches, the Sheikha narrates the importance of a “knowledge economy” in which individuals such as Mimi may contribute their knowledge gained from primarily western institutions to make Qatari and Arab society flourish and return

Arabs and Arabic to its previous glory. While the vision is built on the Sheikha's historical understanding of Harun Al-Rashid' *bait al-hikma* in which he brought together scientists, scholars and poets to share knowledge, it ignores an important difference in the "knowledge economy" model.²⁴

A cultural and social revival is not the impetus behind the construction of a "knowledge economy", which is focused primarily on capital and production. It does not matter to the "knowledge economy" what individuals speak, read or write, as long as knowledge can move easily and capital is increased. Kefela, who writes positively about the adoption of a "knowledge economy" model as a response to the rise of "globalization" and technology for "developing" countries notes that literacy is an essential skill for its success:

In order for those countries to move forward and be strong, they must invest in their citizens, ensuring that no member of society is left behind in the knowledge-based economy. Although most people know how to read, the real question is whether their reading and writing skills are such that they are able to meet the challenges of living and working in society and the knowledge-based economy. [Kefela 2010: 165]

In Qatar, the question of reading and writing in the "knowledge economy" has been squarely fixated on English as a site where government and private interests coalesce. What does this mean for the narrative of the national citizen and in the context of poor literacy skills in the national language?

This strategy of mixing free market economics with "cultural authenticity" is referred to by Kanna (2011) as *Arabized neoliberalism*. In his work on architecture in Dubai, Kanna argues

²⁴ In the literature that supports "knowledge" as the basis of new economies and societies, there are several ways to identify this term. The Sheikha calls it either a knowledge based economy or a knowledge based society (KBE and KBS). I choose to call it knowledge economy because it crystallizes the connection being made between knowledge and economic prosperity.

that the “ethnocracies” of the Gulf, where rule is through shared descent, are built through a convergence of the interests of the ruling family and neoliberalism, or what he calls *Arabized neoliberalism*. Kanna posits that this Arabized neoliberalism is a result of two distinct projects: “The first was to demobilize potential critiques and non-state-sanctioned political movements...The second project consisted in adapting a free-market absolutism to local lived experiences” (2011: 32). This consolidation, Kanna argues, was accomplished by taking neoliberal ideas of economic productivity and aligning them with “themes of cultural authenticity and virtuous citizenship” (34). Kanna continues onto describe how “flexible citizens do not, however, reject Emirati and Muslim identities. They appropriate and enact them in way consciously different from what they see as their more conservative counterparts” (34). Kanna’s analysis of Dubai can be helpful to understanding Doha, as both cities play prominent roles in the national visions of their respective states and share many linguistic, cultural and historic traits. Kanna’s notion of “flexible citizenship” is also appropriate to the emerging middle class of Qataris, who are increasingly being encouraged by the government to engage in the “global” and “Qatari” community.

Although these terms are applicable to Qatar, Doha and its ruling family differ in several ways from that of Dubai. The first is in the level of importance given to Islam in the Qatari ruling family’s vision of the country, the second is in the role of women in the country’s political system and the third is in its more conservative approach to development that more closely

mirrors Dubai's neighboring emirate, Abu Dhabi. Where Dubai is the flashy cosmopolitan and tourist capital, Abu Dhabi and Doha are its more responsible older brothers.²⁵

These three areas of difference are visible in the figure of Sheikha Mozah Al Missned, the wife of the Emir of Qatar, who in her public presence and speech, has attempted to define a vision for the country that combines nationalism with religion and development through a focus on education. In asking Qataris to view themselves as "flexible citizens", Sheikha Mozah is inadvertently placing greater power in the "global", English speaking international citizen than the local" Qatari Arabic speaker. The irony emerges in the fact that although three aspects of Qatar's history and traditions (Islam, Qatari tribal culture and Pan-Arabism) are tied to an Arabic language variety, it is the category of the English educated "global" Qatari that often holds greater power in the educational and social market.

Conclusion

While the economy of Qatar has fluctuated widely and while labour, development investment and technology has transformed the superficial appearance of Qatar, the fundamental social and political system, a system based on consensus between Qatari nationals, has remained stable and based on informal contracts established between the ruling tribe, Al-Thani, and other Qatari tribes at least a century ago. [Fromherz 2012: 156]

This chapter provides an overview of the complex history through which Qatar's ruling family emerged as the leaders of the Qatari state. In the above quote taken from a recent history of Qatar, the author emphasizes stability as opposed to flux and upheaval. Fromherz

²⁵ In the global financial market crisis in 2009, Dubai was badly affected and Abu Dhabi was responsible for bailing it out

furthermore argues that “Qatar cannot be explained in the same modernity-tradition paradigm used in the West” (6). I would go further than Fromherz and argue that Qatar provides a small scale example of the narrative overlapping of historical accounts that emphasizes how “modernity” is constructed through written and oral accounts. Qatar’s national identity was formed both through opposition and acceptance of foreign interference in internal Qatari economic and political affairs. This frame story sets up the contemporary dynamics between the Al-Thani family, the citizens of the new Qatari state and the expatriates who have now come to reside in Qatar in increasing numbers. It also explicates how Qataris historically tried and are still trying to navigate various languages and their ideologies that come with interaction and engagement with diverse populations. I have illustrated how these varied accounts arise from the political and linguistic position of the individual doing the accounting. Qataris, in particular the Al-Thani rulers, are trying to consolidate their rule, through oral and literary accounts in Arabic, of their role as the country’s leaders. The leadership of Qatar is also trying to engage the “international” community through a “knowledge economy” paradigm and by adopting English as a language essential to global citizenship.

While the role of the “flexible” Qatari citizen is to be a bridge between these diverse interests, these individuals often find themselves as “strangers in their own land.” I have argued that an essential part of this estrangement lies in the language ideologies that are being strengthened by the conflation of two interest groups and conflicting projects: that of the “international knowledge economy” that is produced through English, and Qatari national citizenship that is connected to Arabic orality and literacy. In encouraging Arabic speaking Qataris to learn English in order to participate in the “knowledge economy”, the idea of English

as a “global” and “international” language is reified. In response, many Qataris and Arabs defend Arabic along religious and cultural lines. Arabic, becomes even more effectively, “the language of the Qur’an.”

Chapter 2: Actor-Networks in the Knowledge Economy Project

Instead of looking for world-wrapping evolutionary stages, logics, and epistemes, I would begin by finding what I call "projects," that is, relatively coherent bundles of ideas and practices as realized in particular times and places. The choice of what counts as a project depends on what one is trying to learn about, but, in each case, to identify projects is to maintain a commitment to localization, even of the biggest world-making dreams and schemes. The various instantiations of capitalism can be regarded as projects; so can progressive social movements, everyday patterns of living, or university-based intellectual programs. Projects are to be traced in relation to particular historical travels from one place to another; they are caught up in local issues of translation and mobilization; although they may be very powerful, we cannot assume their ability to remake nature and society according to their visions. [Tsing 2000:347]

Anna Tsing's conceptualization of globalization as a series of projects, that can be studied as they move from one location to another, is akin to Bruno Latour's (2005) idea of the actor-network, in that they both emphasize tracing situated accounts. In this chapter, I employ a hybrid of their methodologies in tracing the actor-networks of educational project of the "knowledge economy" and its relationship to literacy ideologies. As Bartlett (2010) notes in her work on critical literacy projects in Brazil, educational projects often fall along the ideological or autonomous models of literacy, concepts developed by Brian Street (1986). The ideological approach to literacy is similar to the idea of language ideologies, where power, social relations and discourse affect the representation of what constitutes language and literacy. The autonomous model, favored by development agencies, "treats knowledge as factual and independent of humans" and views literacy acquisition as a linear and universal process from

illiteracy to literacy (Bartlett 2010: 52). This “autonomous” model rarely attends to how cultural views of language and literacy effect policies that are successful in one context when they move to another.

This chapter illustrates divergent views of language and literacy in the “close encounters” between private American institutions and “locals.” In the following pages, I outline the actors and networks involved in the creation of a “knowledge economy” project in Qatar and the language ideologies that emerge through contestations between these actors. I answer the following questions: How was the project of the “knowledge economy” translated into Qatari society, who did the work of translation and how effective was this process? How did ANT of the knowledge economy effect language ideologies of English and Arabic?

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sheikha Mozah often references the reports of international NGOS in her speeches on education and development in the region.²⁶ In taking, implementing and adapting ideas of social, economic and educational development to Qatar, Sheikha Mozah and Qatar Foundation began to rely heavily on private American institutions, whose role it is to view language and literacy as autonomous and not culturally specific. What has resulted is a focus on the English language, a pre-requisite for participation in the knowledge economy and a push to see Arabic literacy as “less developed” in comparison to English. I will use the term language ideology when referring to broader ideas about what

²⁶ The concept of a “knowledge economy” was made popular through reports commissioned by the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development, the World Bank and other international bodies that are considered regulators of commerce and trade (Dahlman 2001; World Bank 2003). The idea that education is a government service and a human right began to emerge in the rhetoric of these agencies and were pressed upon member governments in the 90’s and 2000’s (World Declaration for Education 1990; Dakar Framework for Action 2000; Arab Human Development Report 2003).

language “should” do and literacy ideology when specific linguistic practices focus on reading and writing. Critical literacy studies would benefit from a focus on language ideologies and how they affect literacy practices.

To begin to understand how ideologies of English and Arabic take shape through projects that focus on a “knowledge economy” model of education, I start with RAND, the agency hired by Sheikha Mozah and Qatar Foundation to provide a model for education reform in Qatar. Following a review of RAND-Qatar’s analysis of the reforms and of their role in it (as “merely” consultants), I share several *hazawi* of how these reforms and their implementation have been perceived by Qataris in various sectors. While those at the Qatar Foundation see the logic of RAND and the new focus on developing Qatari students with proficiency in English, faculty at Qatar University are disappointed in the new “development” focus on the part of the ruling family that is marginalizing Arabic in Qatar. The discussions of these individuals about language and schools in Qatar crosscut lines of public and private schooling, but they also generally fall along these divides. As the former Ministry of Education schools have been slowly shut down, there has been resentment toward the Qatari leadership for promoting privatization of schooling, which essentially leads to English dominating Arabic in the curriculum. This ties back to the neoliberal bent of the “knowledge economy” model, one that emphasizes international organizations and institutions at the expense of local and cultural discussions about the role of language in society. Whereas international NGOs and private corporations favor projects that approach literacy as a universal, autonomous process, local and cultural discussions of language view it as more flexible and dependent upon power relations.

Hazawi of RAND-Qatar: Neutral or Neoliberal?

RAND Qatar was initially asked by Sheikha Mozah to analyze the K-12 education system as it existed under the Ministry of Education (Brewer et al. 2005). After this initial project they set up offices in Doha and began conducting other studies on education at the university level and on projects such as school busing and vouchers for private schools (Moini et al. 2009; Busing). They were hired following the period when Qatar Foundation had begun opening universities in Education City, which was supposed to be the ideal center for the “knowledge economy.” Primary and secondary education, all of which was conducted in Arabic, would need to be reformed to generate students who were capable of entering these English language universities, all of whom would be delivering their programming in their native country’s language (English). RAND Qatar’s report on K-12 education is called “Education for a New Era” and begins with a caveat: “in the realm of education, Qatar, through Qatar Foundation, has attracted branch campuses of some of the best universities in the world. But to support its economic and social development, Qatar needs much stronger results from its elementary and secondary education system, which is widely seen as rigid, outmoded, and resistant to reform” (2003: xvii). The writers imply that the “world class” education system that the Qatari royal family desires can be found in the new American universities funded by Qatar Foundation, but the Qatari elementary and high school education is too rigid and old to graduate students who can attend these institutions. The connection that RAND analysts draw between American “world class” education and Qatar’s K-12 education is particularly important

because it creates a trajectory for Qatari students to meet the standards of these “world class” universities that operate primarily in English.

The RAND agency was not particularly concerned with culture or language in their analysis, striving instead for an “unbiased” report on how to create a unique education system for the state of Qatar (Interview, Head of RAND, July 2007). In the same report mentioned above, the writers critique the Ministry of Education for not having a clear vision of what type of education they were providing students. In place of the Ministry of Education, the RAND writers strongly suggested a standards based model of education with a focus “on four principles: autonomy, accountability, variety, and choice” and noted that “the adoption of these particular principles was notable in a region where such principles are both rare and poorly understood” (Brewer et. Al 2003: xix).

Johara, who worked for RAND, described the agency’s role as controversial and problematic for the following reasons:

I read both of RAND’s reports because I work there. One of the problems is that these people are experts but they are experts in the States. The project leaders are usually based in DC, Santa Monica and the states. They are not the ones based here. What they come up with- they don’t know the history, tradition, culture, the history of education and so what they come up with sometimes doesn’t work. It shows up in the implementation. [Interview, June 5 2007]

Johara agreed with the Head of RAND that it is “easy to blame RAND, but they only give choices. It is the government that chose the independent schools.” The writers of the RAND report offered the government three options, ranging “from limited choice and variety to significant choice and variety” (Brewer et al. 2003: 5). These were mentioned in the

introduction, but I would like repeat them again here to illustrate the increasing privatization involved in each choice: 1) Reform the current Ministry system; 2) Adopt a free market model in which new independent, charter schools would thrive or fail based on competition; and 3) Completely privatize the schooling system by adopting vouchers. What is showcased as “variety” and “choice,” is also increased privatization of education. These strategies were taken from the context of United States’ education system, from which most of the RAND analyst originated. They chose the most “radical and innovative solutions” being used in American schools without highlighting the debates that are raging in the American context regarding the value of the privatization of education. Bartlett et al (2002) critique these trends within the American context as a result of neoliberalism:

Marketization takes many forms, discursive and structural. Primary among those is the unqualified celebration of "choice" in schooling, whether as vouchers, charters (also known as "public school choice"), or magnet schools. The rhetoric of choice positions parents and students as consumers of schooling; it implies that all parents are equally informed, politically connected, and capable of securing for their own children the best education. [2002:6].

Bartlett et al. (2002) analyze the effects of neoliberal market based strategies on North Carolina’s education debates and find that they result in stratification based on class and race. The American national rhetoric of market based strategies is used in local school systems to justify why certain schools should serve a particular segment of the population (the harder working, more affluent and “caring” middle class) while other schools serving less privileged and minority groups can continue to receive less funding because they serve “problem students” who disrupt the process of learning and need to be separated from “hard working” and “deserving” students and placed in “alternative schools.” This rhetoric is directly linked to

the idea that education should follow a business model of “choice” and “variety”, implying that all citizens are equally able to find the best schooling for their children. It also reflects neoliberal rationalizations that connect wealth accumulation with industriousness and poverty with the opposite. It encourages the belief that some people choose to be poor while others work hard and become rich.

A similar critique to that of Bartlett et al. is made of RAND by an education specialist who used to work at Qatar University. Reporter Turk Al -Salih uses the term *atlaq al nar* أطلق النار, which is the Arabic equivalent to “opens fire,” to describe the interviewee’s opinions on the school reform movement (Al-Salih 2008). Doctor Al-Kobeisi outlines several problems with the reform of education in Qatar at the very beginning of the article in bullet point format:

- The incorrect implementation of the system of Independent schools has changed it into *a profit making institution*.
- The arrival of a *world class system* of education is merely the *claim* of the Evaluation Institute.
- The *philosophy of the system of instruction is absent* and the strategy ambiguous
- Leaving the assessment and procurement of the textbooks to the whims of people is a pedagogical disadvantage
- The effect is dangerous of depending on English in teaching Science and Maths.
- *Is departing from the official language in the system of education permitted in the constitution?*
- There is no justification for making mandatory *an experimental system* in exchange for the system of education.
- Supporting one school over another *threatens the absence of a principal of individual equality among students*.

(Turk Al-Salih 2008, translated by author and emphasis added)

Al-Kobeisi’s first and last criticisms focus on the economic inequality that could be created by making education a “profit making institution.” In the middle, he focuses on curriculum, the strain placed on teachers and the odd philosophy of the reforms that neglect “the official

language” and make English the language of instruction in math and science. In summary, al-Kobesi does not understand why Qatar should adopt a charter school model, whose purpose is to create competition and is based on privatization and profit, in the place of a national system of education. Other issues he addresses in the article are the lack of standards for geography, Islamic studies and history, all of which he suggests provide the essential elements for giving children a sense of their “tradition.” This article was posted on several Arabic blogs and discussed by Arabic speakers who expressed approval of al-Kobeisi’s points. It was unclear though whether or not this caused any serious threat to the growing reform movement, although in a visit to the Dean of QU’s College of Education, the secretary asked me if I would be interested in a copy of al-Kobeisi’s articles on the subject. It appeared that they were being distributed, although to what effect was unclear.²⁷ Of the following criticisms of the reform mentioned by al-Kobeisi, several center on the neoliberal bent of the charter school model presented in the RAND analysis, which the author also lambasts as a westernizing agent only invested in the interests of the United States. The overall message is that this new education reform is not an awakening of tradition, but an agent of westernization that will destroy the country’s education system and cultural roots.²⁸

²⁷ Forming groups, unions and any associations is subject to approval by the Qatari government. Thus there are no unions and opposition groups who protest or voice loud opposition to government policies (they may do so quietly). Sheikh Hamad and Sheikha Mozah have created venues for citizens and residents to debate social issues, such as Doha Debates, which is produced in Education City at the Qatar Foundation head quarters. Another program, *lakum al qarar* (The Decision is Yours) is in Arabic and discusses issues of importance to Qataris, like school reform. A discussion of the reform on one show, where students were allowed to share their experiences with Sabah Al-Haidos, the head of the Supreme Education Council in charge of the reforms, showed the public’s frustration with the reforms measures which left teachers without textbooks, curriculum or guidance to create curriculums by themselves. Students expressed problems with the lack of set curriculum, citing use of copies in place of textbooks as a major issue.

²⁸ The Arabic text of Dr. al-Kobeisi’s critiques is found in Index 4.

In addition to RAND's advocacy of a neoliberal education system for Qatar, was its insistence on standards-based education. This led to many western agencies being contracted to help implement standards for core subjects of English, Arabic, Math and Science and to hire testing institutions to evaluate the competency of students in these standards on a yearly basis. The Center for British Teachers and the Education Testing Service worked with the new Supreme Education Council to help Qatari teachers develop the tools for the new charter school model. The creation of the Supreme Education Council was a suggestion of the RAND report and was supposed to evaluate and develop the reform process, whose core was standards based curriculum. In regards to the Arabic standards, the RAND analysts write about the challenges that the SEC faced:

As the national language, Arabic was an obvious choice. English was deemed important for use in the labor market and prepare students for post-secondary education abroad [and at EC schools]. Mathematics and science were seen as important because of the modern world's emphasis on the sciences and technology. In addition, the design team anticipated that the standards development process would be far less controversial for mathematics and science than for the social sciences and humanities ...Limiting the standards development to these four subjects initially met with some resistance. **The most frequently voiced concern was over the exclusion of Islamic Studies (Sharia).... The SEC, in fact, mandated that all Independent schools offer Islamic Studies.**

Although it was controversial to do so, the Institute leadership and the Arabic working group concurred with the plan and **agreed that the Arabic standards represented a qualitative advance in both Arabic education and the use of language as a tool for learning and cognitive development.**

The novelty of the approach and the potential sensitivity meant that Arabic standards development took somewhat longer than standards development for other subjects. In addition, implementing the Arabic standards would require more work than implementing the standards for the other subjects for three reasons:

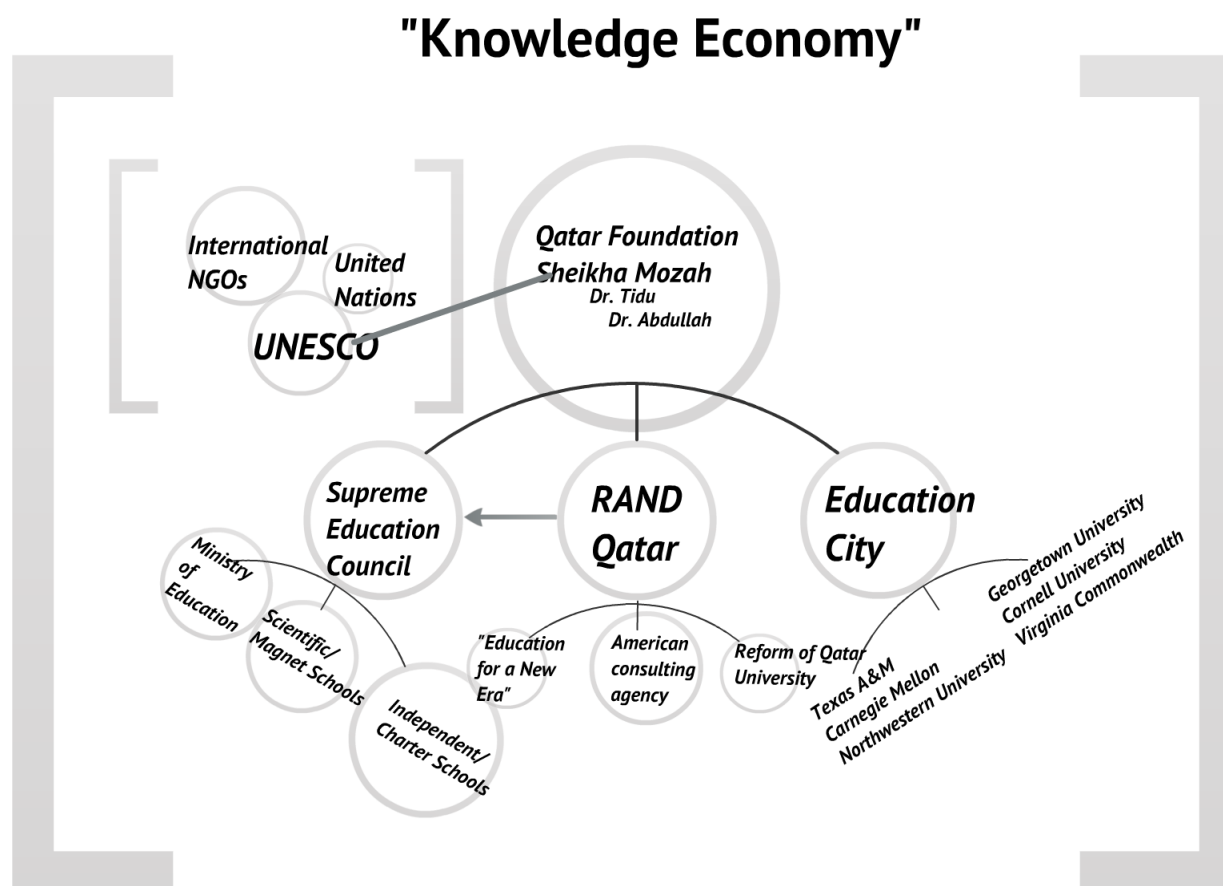
1. The needed texts, textbooks and other instrumental resources were less readily available and therefore might need to be developed.
2. **Teachers would need focused pedagogical support to develop new teaching approaches because they might find it more comfortable or be pressured to teach Arabic in traditional ways.**
3. **A clear, but sensitive distinction between the teaching of religion as a separate subject and the teaching of Arabic needed to be spelled out in the standards document.**
(Brewer et. al. 2007:100-104, emphasis added)

The highlighted segments of this passage indicate several key areas where RAND and Qatar Foundation's vision have conflicted with critics. This section also emphasizes a recurring ideology of English, which "is deemed important for use in the labor market and prepare students for post-secondary education abroad [and at EC schools]." Many individuals including al-Kobeisi above, find the lack of emphasis on Arabic and Islamic studies problematic. On the other hand, the writers of the RAND report find the general Ministry system and especially the Arabic and Islamic-Studies curriculums to be problematic. Why this disjuncture? For the RAND analysts from America:

The Arabic standards embodied a new approach to teaching Arabic as a native language. While the traditional study of Arabic includes memorization and recitation of the Qur'an and emphasizes complex grammatical rules, the new approach emphasizes a variety of texts and applications to stimulate students to use their language as a practice tool for communication. In addition, by separating the teaching of Islam and Qur'an from the teaching of Arabic language, students are free to criticize the texts presented and therefore to acquire valuable reasoning skills in their native language (Brewer et al. 2006)

The section is particularly interesting for its attitude towards Arabic language standards. It reflects an ideology of Arabic that considers its connection to religious education as prohibitive of "critical thinking" and "reasoning skills." This attitude towards Arabic predominated towards the colonial period and has been critiqued by several scholars (Boyle 2004; 2006 Mitchell 1998; Wagner 1995). As mentioned in chapter 1, RAND consultants who worked on Arabic language

standards looked to English standards as a model, standards which did not depend on religious texts for language education. The emphasis placed on restricting religious instruction and language instruction is also indicative of an autonomous model of literacy (Street 1986), one in which literacy is important for “cognitive development,” not spiritual or moral development. These opposing views of the reform process are notable for their focus on different elements of the education system in Qatar. RAND perceives itself as an unbiased consulting agency that seeks to provide quality services to the Qatari leadership and to align K-12 education with the new “world class” universities of Qatar Foundation and Education City. While the RAND writers view the Ministry of Education model of education as lacking in rigor and standards, al-Kobeisi faults RAND for having no clear philosophy when he says “the philosophy of the system of instruction is absent and the strategy ambiguous.” Al-Kobeisi, who represents the “traditional ways” of the Ministry so disliked by the RAND writers, suggests that it is RAND that has no understanding of what the purpose of education in Qatar should be. For Al-Kobeisi, schools in Qatar were designed to teach Qataris their culture, their traditions and their language, in addition to teaching them math, science and technology. These varying interpretations on the role of education in Qatar have resulted in several strands or networks of schools opening up in Qatar that will be detailed in chapter 3. In the following diagram, I outline the “knowledge economy” that Sheikha Mozha and Qatar Foundation have tried to create in recent years. It includes RAND, Education City and its American universities, the old Ministry of Education, the new Supreme Education Council and the new Independent Schools.



In order to continue tracing the ANT, I met with several of Sheikha Mozah's key advisers at the Qatar Foundation. The following stories illustrate how important English has become to the "knowledge economy" project. Both Ali Al Attiya and Naveen Ahmed agree that English has become important to the ruling family's vision for the Qatari state. The conclusion is that in order to become "global" and "Qatari citizens", Qataris must acquire English as fast as they can.

“How fast can they pick up English?”

I visited Qatar Foundation’s headquarters three times during my stay in Qatar and was in contact through email with a few members of the board of directors. The Foundation is the organizing umbrella for Education City, Qatar Academy, Al-Jazeera Children’s Channel, Doha Debates and many more schools, organizations and programs (see Appendix 3 for a full list of organizations). Qatar Foundation is also involved in healthcare and building new private hospitals, they fund an Arabian horse breeding center and a new state of the art convention center and they also recently began a space exploration program. The unifying element among these projects is that the Sheikha and her board approve each venture as being helpful to developing Qatar’s “knowledge economy.” Qatar Foundations stated mission is as follows:

Qatar Foundation's mission is to prepare the people of Qatar and the region to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world, and to make Qatar a leader in innovative education and research. To achieve that mission, QF supports a network of centers and partnerships with elite institutions, all committed to the principle that a nation's greatest natural resource is its people. Education City, Qatar Foundation's flagship project is envisioned as a Center of Excellence in education and research that will help transform Qatar into a **knowledge-based society**.

In an interview with Dr. Naveen Ahmad, Science and Technology Advisor to Sheikha Mozah, I learned more about the vision of Qatar Foundation. He spoke a little about his own personal experiences, being the son of Indians who lived under British rule and traveled to Kenya to help run the British Empire. He believes that “Arabs, Africans and South Asians must have a deep knowledge and own intellectual property, not just do projects” otherwise they will continue to be “modern slaves.” In describing Qatar Foundation, he says, “It was the idea of Her Highness to create research led organizations and programs with higher standards” and in his opinion, “It

is better to put money into these things than into cars.” He then described the challenges the administration will face in the long run with healthcare, energy and population control. He expressed some frustration with the lack of graduate institutions and a research culture, saying “there is no history or tradition” of these things. He also said that Qataris will have to make trade-offs, meaning will have to do without maids, cleaners, car washers and other menial labor in order to create the “knowledge based economy” that is needed. In order for development to occur, Dr. Ahmad said the ratio of foreigners to nationals will have to decline, primarily through reductions in the largest population of expatriates (the low-class, “un-educated” sector) not the white collar workers, which they will need more of in order to fuel their economy. He also highlighted the important role that women play, saying that “men deal with them equally” and this is largely a result of the influence of Sheikha Mozah.

As for issues of language and cultural change, Dr. Ahmad related that “the Qataris are very concerned about keeping their culture” and that “there are a lot of programs being developed in order to do just that.” The concern now is “how fast they can pick up English” and that they want to “accelerate the westernization.” He described the nearest analogy to Qatar’s vision for the future as that of Switzerland where everyone speaks 2-3 languages at least. The problem, in Dr. Ahmad’s opinion, is extremists who use language “as an excuse” to slow down development; by this he meant those who complained about the heavy use of English language and the rise in status of the white collar expatriates he refers to as “fuel” for the economy (Interview, July 2007).

In the following interview with Dr. Al-Attiya, chief assistant to Sheikha Mozah, and the father of one of my former students, it becomes clear how important English has become to the Qatari elite involved in Qatar Foundation's project to build a "knowledge economy". Dr. Al-Attiya received his undergraduate degree at Qatar University and his PhD from a university in the UK. When we met in the summer of 2007, he and I discussed why I was in a PhD program and not working in the schools, telling me, "Phd's are easy, you just have to put some things together." Every time I met Dr. Al-Attiya, he was always in Qatari national dress (a white *thobe*, black *agal* which holds either a white or red checkered *gutrah* on the head) and on this day, I noticed that he had a prayer rug tucked away in the corner of his office. He informed me that he would be taking his children, including Maryam, to Disneyland the next day. He asked me candidly what I thought he should do with Maryam: "I was speaking with Hind [the daughter of the Emir] about my children and I told her that Maryam goes to Gulf English. She was surprised and said, 'Why don't you send them to Qatar Academy? There English will be much better'". He continued onto say, "But I don't like to take her out of Gulf English because she likes it there and she has lots of relatives and friends in the school. She will be fine right?" (Interview, June 13, 2007). Dr. Al-Attiya is worried that his children (majority of whom attend the British Gulf English School) will not acquire English as well as those Qataris who attend Qatar Academy and other private schools in Doha. This concern is brought about by the Emir's daughter who feels Qataris should learn English well. The emphasis, on the part of the ruling family of Al-Thani, is for Qataris to acquire English in order to participate in the "knowledge economy" project. I assured Dr. Abdullah that Maryam was an excellent student. I didn't include the thought that

she would most likely speak, read and write English equal to or better than she would be able to in Standard Arabic.

Education City: Education for the Elites

I think it is supposed to be connected- it is all part of the reform. Qatar University, at the independent schools, at education city is part of the reform and the same people have their hands in them. Dr. Sheikha (Abdulla, QU's president) is on the board of QF and Sheikha Mozah is on the board of Supreme Education Council. It is all pieces of the same puzzle. Certainly there is a big push to try to get more and more students, Qatari students qualified for EC universities while Qatar Academy was another experimental part of the Education reform

---Kim, Admissions at Education City

Another essential element of Qatar Foundation's vision for a "knowledge economy" is Education City, the brainchild of Sheikha Mozah and Qatar Foundation's Board of Directors. In 2009, Education City opened the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, the only indigenously created institution of higher education in Education City. Education City consists currently of six American universities, one British University, one French lycee, a high school (Qatar Academy) and several other educational and social services. This part of the "knowledge economy" runs very differently than the other two parts (K-12 schooling and Qatar University) because its curriculum, staff and organization comes primarily from the U.S. Its student body is made up equally of Qataris and expatriates. However, from conversations with Kim, a director of admissions of one the American universities, it was clear that it was extremely difficult to find enough "qualified" Qataris to fill the quota demanded by the government's Qatarization initiatives.

Kim, the speaker of the above quote, had worked in admissions at the American university for several years prior to moving to Qatar to help the fledgling branch campus. We had many conversations over the summer of 2007 and during the 2009-2010 school year about schools in Qatar. She paid close attention to the changes in the country because of her job. Her husband also worked at Qatar University, so she knew a bit about the changes occurring there. She had originally sent her daughter to Qatar Academy, but she took her out because it was becoming a “Qatari” school and no longer “international.” She also noted, “The Qataris (at Education City) all know each other, they are all from the same two or three families.” She spoke highly of a number of Qatari students, but told me that it was difficult to find enough Qataris with the English, Math and critical thinking skills needed to attend Georgetown. This frustration came out over discussions about the independent schools and their attempts to meet the admissions requirements set by EC schools:

Problem I see with the Independent schools is when I go in there to do presentations even when they have great principals, teachers, who are really enthusiastic and really want the best for their students, they call all the admissions directors in and they ask us what do you guys want because we’ll make an engineering track, a pre-med track, an IF track, etc. business track,... NO NO NO.. if you really want to prepare your students make them all take math up to the last level, art, science, English. They are still in track mode. So then we get the students from the art track apply to us, but they don’t have the math so they can’t do economics. It is a problem. The Ministry of Education schools- they still track Arts, Sciences, and French. English is there even in the Arts schools, but it is very very basic [Interview September 2009]

Kim also informed me why the school reform movement was not conducted through the Ministry of Education (MOE), explaining that “it was not cooperating” and had “loyalties to the old system,” (a strong Arabic and Islamic studies curriculum and centralized control of all curriculum). The relationship between the MOE, the new independent schools and Education

City is conflicted. Since everything is connected to the “knowledge economy” concept, or supposed to be, the new independent schools are ideally supposed to be feeder schools for Education City and a reformed Qatar University, but the results (standardized test scores) of the independent school students are still not high enough in English, math and science. Kim noted that Qatari students who attend EC schools are usually products of the science and technology magnet schools, which opened prior to the Independent schools under the Ministry of Education (Brewer et al. 2003). They draw the best Qatari public school students and have strong curriculums in math, science, English *and* Arabic. “These students usually prefer Cornell’s medical program or Carnegie Mellon’s engineering program” said Kim (Interview, September 2009).

The Education City schools relationship to projects of education reform is directly connected to the neoliberal “knowledge economy” construct. The universities create a hierarchy, where private English education is at the very top of the “world class” education that Qataris can attain. But in order to attain the status and privilege of attending one of these institutions, one must be from an affluent and elite Qatari family and a product of private English language education. Language ideologies emerge based on models of education which posit English as “global” and Arabic as irrelevant to the global economy. These issues and many more are more obvious in Qatar University’s (QU) relationship to the ongoing reforms to Qatar’s education system.

Qatar University: Reform from the “Top-Down”

There are some discussions on where is education going, about modernizing, competition. There are some who are defensive about the larger changes, worried about losing traditional values and it is the governments fault because they have framed it like that: education has to be reformed, Qatar must be competitive.

-Sayyida, teacher in International Affairs Program at QU

I had first stumbled onto the issue of school reform when I met the Vice President of Academic Affairs, Sheikha Jabor Al-Thani, at Qatar University in May of 2007. The university plays an important role in formulating the identity of Qatar and several faculty members have been vocal about their displeasure with the direction of education reform in the country. This was made explicit in the criticisms made by al-Kobeisi in the newspaper Al Raya, but also shows up in conferences and talks about “preserving” Qatar’s culture and traditions. The current president, Sheikha Abdulla Al Missned is the first female to head the university. As her last name might indicate, she is related to Sheikha Mozah and is her aunt. Sheikha Abdulla’s presidency at Qatar University coincided with the reforms to K-12 education and the creation of Education City and Qatar Academy. She serves on the boards of the Qatar Foundation, Supreme Education Council and Qatar Academy. Sheikha Abdulla’s right hand at the university is Sheikha Jabor Al Thani who is known throughout the faculty and staff as an exceptionally intelligent and motivated woman. Sheikha Jabor is a Qatari woman from the tribe of Al-Thani, as many departmental heads at Qatar University commonly are (both Qatari and female, not al-Thani).²⁹ Sheikha Jabor cooperated with RAND in their 2009 report about Qatar University’s

²⁹ According to Winkler, 96% of top administrative school positions are held by Qataris. At Qatar University, 24 professors, assistants, vice presidents and other staff are from the Al-Thani family.

reform efforts, which acknowledged that the pace of the reforms was too quick for many and had some repercussions which were unfortunate. This report was a confirmation of my own personal meeting with Sheikha Jabor in 2007.

Shaikha Jabor's black *abaya* hung from a coat rack in the corner of the room and she greeted my husband and I wearing a navy blue skirt, shirt and black scarf. We began with a discussion of our school and program affiliations in the U.S. and upon hearing about my background in teaching, she recommended a course on school reform in Qatar that was "based on the facts, not on what is being said in the media." Frustration was clear in the Dean's voice and words, particularly at those who saw the reforms of Qatar University and in K-12 schooling as an attack on Qatari culture and language. Upon discussion of the op-ed that my husband would write about the Arabic program at Qatar University, she smiled and said, "that would give us some good publicity." The Dean proceeded to pinpoint some of the major controversies in the reforms: the increase in foreign influence on school policy, the focus on English and the resulting increase in the foreign population [Field notes, June 17th, 2007]

Following my initial meeting with Sheikha Jabor, I interviewed several professors at Qatar University regarding the reforms and how they were tied to Qatar Foundation and Arabic and Islamic culture at the university. The idea that reform at Qatar University was a "top-down" process was reiterated by several individuals. While many felt reform was necessary, they disagreed with the way it was being framed. Mona in the Sociology Department shared with me some of her experiences with the reforms effects:

The only program that will be totally in Arabic will be the Shariah (Islamic Law) program- from humanities, social sciences. The university is raising the bar, but the students are not catching up- many students feel it is unfair- they are shocked- they never have exposure to English and all of a sudden- they are expected to know English. Perhaps if there are more independent schools, more international schools they will graduate better students. Some people feel it is good competition. They welcome it. Among the students there are distinct categories, some who want the American degree, but others are more secure in their Arab identity, they are shocked even when they come to QU and see the reforms. Some students ask- "Why are we imitating?" I think we should totally push for reform, but then I see the need to build on the level of the students

preceding them. There is a huge debate about independent schools in Qatar- about their status, what are they? Are they a threat? (Interview, July 12, 2008)

Mona implied that the independent schools suggested by RAND and implemented by the government were a particular point of controversy. She also tells of students who come to Qatar University expecting a setting situated in Arabic and Islamic norms, but find English to be placed in a position of great importance. These students struggle to pick up English, being forced to take remedial classes if they do not pass the entrance exams. Mona sympathizes with these students, but suggests that they are necessary changes that are “raising the bar.” The main contention seems to be over language, but others along the lines of culture, tradition and religion also appear.

Sayyida, who is quoted in the introduction to this section, is a lecturer in the International Affairs department and teaches classes of Qatari men remedial English and basic political theory.³⁰ She says about the reform:

There are two trends at play. The first is the *top down* nature of these reforms. Qatar Foundation and Shaikha Mozah are pushing them. You’ll see in the school the two trends in the lectures of the professors- one side emphasizes modernization of education and the other has a very traditional interpretation- in terms of a protest against Qatar Foundation- it usually surfaces at international conferences- during the

³⁰ Qatar University is a gender segregated university and has separate men and women’s campuses. Women may come onto the men’s campus for some classes, but male students are not permitted to enter the women’s side, except professors, staff and service workers. It appears that the main reason for segregation is so that men and women (primarily Qatari) could not get to know one another in these settings. This was primarily connected by informants to the notion of family “honor”. At least three informants related stories of Qatari women using the face veil to avoid being recognized in mixed settings such as coffee shops, malls and movie theaters so that word would not get back to their families of their behavior. There is also a concurrent practice of many Qatari women of unveiling entirely (both face and head veils) upon leaving the country. I was told three stories by primarily non-Qataris that on flights leaving the country, Qatari women would enter wearing black abayas, go into the bathroom during the flight and come out completely changed , veils, scarves and abayas removed.

discussion time- for example at the Innovation in Islam conferences. (emphasis added, Interview, July 25, 2007)

Sayyida also sees similar concerns amongst her students, mostly Qatari males, who feel alienated by the linguistic turn and the strong emphasis on English in the economy. Language appears again to be a primary issue in an article in the Arabic magazine, *اجيال*, or Generations, about the Foundation Program at QU, which is a program created to ensure incoming students have competency in subjects such as English, Math, Science and Arabic. This article gives us a student perspective and the administrative response to the new requirements for students.

“My Language is French”

From his viewpoint, student Al Hadi, son of Muhammad Abd Allah, says he was completely astonished by the foundation program in Qatar University, ‘I never studied the English language before because I came from Mauritania where they consider the second official language the French language, and we never studied English there because it was not given a very big preference in our curriculum and for that reason I was very surprised by the program and what increased my astonishment on top of the hardship of the resolution was the high average percentage requested from the student- 75%. I don’t understand why such a high percentage is requested and why they separate us from the rest of the students’.

From the University

The university wants to be included in the contemporary modern society- you know that the market economy today asks that knowledge of the English language as all the academic research and the internet uses English – and so this language has become a necessity in the modern age. And it is a responsibility on the university to graduate talented students who are able to compete in the work place and able to follow studies outside without any problems and so this Foundation Program came to be the first step in this direction and I think it is an important one. [*Ajyal* 2009: 6]

The student is frustrated that he is being asked to learn English when he already has competency in Arabic and French. He questions why he would need to know English in order to attend the national university of Qatar, a self-described Arab state? The administration replies

that English has become a necessity in the “modern age” where the economy and technology demand knowledge of English.

Jenny, a Georgetown student working in International Affairs³¹ program summarizes the contestations at Qatar University in the following comments:

Qatar University is a tough place to work, especially if you are not covered. I used to go to the administration building and they would say we know who you are. Now it is easier because there are more women from the West. **Qatar Foundation is focused on English and bringing in native-speakers.**

The university has also started this new two year remedial program called the Foundation Program for students to help them with English. So you do English for two years- before your BA- focusing on English and Math. **This new department (Foundation Program) has a lot of faculty and is by far the biggest department- so now there are more westerners.** The students in the remedial programs have special activities and get seats at the Doha Debates.

It’s a huge department and it makes things different at QU. Like I went to the introduction program for the department and there was a woman wearing short sleeves and a wrap dress!

This university is really conservative. The doors have to be locked- even hallways that are used by both men and women are avoided by Qatari girls. The *shariah* (Islamic Law) boys will tell some of my girls to cover, call them sluts, tell them to take off their make-up, one guy was terrorizing my students - telling the girls they shouldn’t be studying. .. There is a lot of music at Education City-at Georgetown. The boys and girls spend time in the halls, in the lounges, talking, listening to music-dancing together, Farzhana is starting an Asian Society - they are doing dances - it is totally different. [Interview July 23, 2007]

Jenny mentions Qatar Foundation and Sheikha Mozah as being particularly interested in bringing “native-speakers” of English to Qatar to teach Qataris English. She also mentions

³¹ INAF program was begun by Amira Sonbol from Georgetown University to allow women at QU to benefit from a wider selection of social science classes.

another important symbol of reform for individuals in Qatar, Education City. Education City schools are gender mixed in every aspect of their schooling, while Qatari University is gender segregated and religiously conservative. Jenny connects Sheikha Mozah, Qatar Foundation and Education City as influential in Qatar University's recent changes and reforms. She also emphasizes how the increase in westerners on campus and the increasing emphasis on English is causing reactions on the part of students, particularly religious ones, who see the changes in language, dress and behavior as problematic.

The tension at Qatar University, apparent in these narratives of Qatari faculty and staff, are also manifested in complaints about the production of official documents and emails in English, sometimes without Arabic translation, the increasing numbers of English only speaking faculty, the increasing movement of women on the men's campus and the increasing presence of unveiled women, Muslim and non-Muslim on both campuses. The rising emphasis on English at Qatar University is connected to the reforms at large within Qatar's education systems. As Johara says:

Reform of Qatar University, which also her highness asked RAND to do is basically the same things- reform curriculum, reform staff- there is now a two year foundation program- which you've probably heard of- English, Computer science and math, I believe and you can test out of it- but only a few do- a very small percentage. Most people don't, like one percent. **There was a bit of criticism- that people can't get into Education City and now they can't get admission to QU.** They raised the admissions criteria- the GPA is higher-so where are they supposed to go? **And everything is in English so the people who didn't catch up and didn't go through the independent schools- they don't have that background in English** – the basic criticism is how can you start this new system on people who don't know it before? [Interview, July 16th, 2007]

Johara emphasizes the difficult situation that Qatari students who have never been in English language schools face when entering universities, both public and private, in Qatar. At Qatar University, they are now required to take English proficiency tests and are not allowed to take courses at the university until they receive a certain score on the TOEFL. Whether at the newly designed education model at Education City and the Independent Schools or at the state university, students are being required by a new set of networks to test well in English, while the same is not required for Arabic.

Conclusion. Linguistic Catch-22 of the Knowledge Economy

In the Spring of 2010, a year after one of Sheikha Mozah's son had graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, the Sheikha met with the senior officials at the university. The Sheikha purportedly told the Dean that her son was not able to give a speech in fusha, the official state language of Qatar, and this was a problem for a program which was ideally supposed to educate students in the skills of the Foreign Service. She told the Dean that the Arabic teachers at Georgetown should be given greater resources and time in order to graduate Qatari students who were fluent in Standard Arabic. Sheikha Mozah's own son's inability to give a speech in Arabic after attending Qatar Academy and Georgetown University, both institutions of the Sheikha's own Education City, reflect a catch-22 that is produced by the "knowledge economy" model. While Qataris are encouraged to be Qatari and global citizens, they are caught in new networks of schooling that place English as the language of the "global" citizen. At the same time, they are being asked by the Qatari leadership to represent the Qatari state by learning Standard Arabic. While literacy in English

gives Qataris privileged access to a “knowledge economy,” Standard and Qatari Arabic are still necessary prerequisites of Qatari national citizenship.

The “knowledge economy”’s directional challenges are not a simple question of Arabic versus English or تغريب/taghrib versus تعريب/ta’reeb (westernization versus Arabization), but rather the entanglement of these spaces and individuals through private, corporate and international interests in Qatar’s education sector. The dependency created by the leaders of Qatar upon international development rubrics and standards and on American companies and universities, has positioned these bodies (and their language of English) as the purveyors of “quality” education. The “Arab and Islamic” vision touted by the government is not in the interests of the numerous agencies, universities and individuals who are profiting off the “knowledge economy” being created by the Qatari government’s dependence on their languages and skills.

The leadership of Qatar has adopted a development hierarchy in which English is a standard or model language for education and this ideology has been implemented in schools throughout Qatar. While the rhetoric of the reform boasts of an awakening of Arab(ic) culture, the identifiable language of that culture has been placed in an awkward position, relegated to less and less time in the curriculum. This inconsistency in approach, one focused on cultural revival and the other economic, can be traced back to the “knowledge economy” concept of agencies like the United Nations Development Program and its publications such as the Arab Human Development Reports and the policy recommendations of think tanks such as the RAND Qatar Policy Institute. These agencies promote neoliberal policies and recommendations at the

expense of local issues and cultural variation, hoping that whatever incongruencies that arise out of their policies will be resolved by implementation on the local level. Their influence can be seen in the speeches of Sheikha Mozah and the language of the education reform movement.

Culture, language and other forms of “local knowledge” are often paid lip service to or even considered obstacles to the success of their market based recommendations. Blommaert (1994) argues in his work on language ideology in Tanzania that development ideology ranks languages and defines them as “underdeveloped” in relation to more “developed” languages such as English. In the case of Swahili, it is always found lacking in its attempts to catch up to the latest changes and developments in terminology in English. This creates a hierarchy of linguistic achievement and capacity in which the less “developed” language is always struggling to catch up to the developed language. This linguistic model has its equivalence in the notion of developed and developing countries so oft-repeated in the development discourse. Blommaert’s argument can be adapted to the Qatari context in which the focus on “development” ranks English as a priority and places Arabic in a secondary or peripheral position, one in which it is marked as “less developed.”

Mazawi (2010) argues that the “knowledge society” (another term for a knowledge economy) rhetoric emerges from a particular constellation of international, regional and state power dynamics. Although this is most pertinent to states which depend on foreign and international aid, Mazawi argues that it is also applicable to Gulf States which are restructuring their education systems to align with the global market.

Within this broader context, it is fair to argue that dominant development discourses in the Arab region reproduce neoliberal and free-market discourses disseminated by

international consultancies, aid and development agencies, and sponsored think tanks. The institutional assortment operates as a panacea network, interwoven with the apparatuses of the Arab state at various levels of policy making (Mazawi 2010: 217) .

Mazawi's analysis is useful to understanding the ways in which the actor-networks of Qatar's "knowledge economy" have developed. Mazawi also argues that the neoliberal models proposed by international agencies in order to create knowledge economies play on the imbalance of power between large international bodies and economically developing states. Another criticism posed by Mazawi is that the international development discourse on the knowledge economy is disinterested in "local knowledge." Development discourse is used by states to direct their populations towards meeting "international" standards, but often disregards the interests and needs of their target interest groups (children, women, minorities, etc.). Bayat (2005) also argues that the knowledge economy is really a set of strategies that primarily benefits the state and corporations and arises out of "highly developed market forces in post-industrial societies" (200). These scholars contend that agencies and policies which argue for neoliberal reforms of education (free market, charter schools, vouchers, choice, etc.) open up schools to the pressures of pleasing the market, as opposed to ensuring "quality" education.

Munir Bashshrur (2010), in the same volume as Mazawi, compares education reform in Qatar to Muhammad Ali's efforts as the ruler of Egypt in the early 19th century to reform education. Muhammad Ali's initial focus on importing European models and teachers is juxtaposed against the Jesuit and Presbyterian missionary schools in Lebanon who used Arabic as the language of instruction. Where Muhammad Ali's reforms failed, the missionary schools produced many of the best schools in Lebanon, of which one is considered among the best

universities in the region today (e.g., The American University of Beirut). Bashshur argues that what is happening in Qatar is grander in scale and in vision to that of Muhammad Ali. Bashshur is concerned that a cultural revolution is actually being suppressed by the reforms in Qatar because of two reasons: the standardization of Arabic language education along the lines of an American model of education and the lack of co-operation between these new institutions in Qatar and older bodies such as Qatar University. He quotes from the RAND report on K-12 schools on their efforts to create Arabic language standards; something the agency claimed was the first attempt of its kind in the region. Bashshur is not impressed by the effort to create Arabic language standards, which he sees as very similar to those developed in Egypt and he fears that the separation between religion and language will extend to one between language and culture (2010:261). Bashshur draws important parallels between Egypt and Qatar in their attempts to create a cultural awakening through borrowed models, to which he concludes, “could it be that we are replicating [in Qatar], in some form or another, Muhammad Ali’s experience in the early part of the nineteenth century, where he superimposed a new layer of ‘modern’ schools on an older layer of traditional schools, with the two kinds never really reconciling?” (2010:268).

The supporters of the “knowledge economy” model at Qatar Foundation are pushing public schools and Qatar University to adopt neoliberal education strategies that would support “variety” and “choice” and connect education with the market. The relationship drawn by Sheikha Mozah between the “knowledge economy” model with a cultural and religious revival is actually placing Qataris and Arabic in a catch-22, one in which it is responsible for a cultural revival, but perpetuated as incapable of generating it. Those who speak and use Arabic are

viewed as inferior, although fluency in Standard Arabic is a requisite for cultural and political success within the Arabic speaking part of Qatari society. The imposition of a “knowledge economy” also furthers linguistic divisions in the society as individuals must overcome class, educational testing and racial and ethnic divisions (between Qataris and expatriates) to arrive at a position of authority as “global” and “local” citizens.

Globalization is often presented as a tidal wave that sweeps through and dramatically changes the way societies are connected. In studying a “close encounter” between the “global” project of the “knowledge economy” and its “local” implementation in Doha, this chapter illustrates how exactly actor-networks are formed through these encounters and what struggles arise as a result. Through tracing the local interactions and movements of individuals and ideas, we can see how this “globalizing” force is actually shifting the terrain, rather than assuming its power to wipe out everything in its path. In the following chapter, the shifting waterways are forcing Arabic teachers in K-12 schools to reaffirm the value of Arabic in a country where English is being heavily prioritized. In order to defend Arabic, these teachers often turn to the ideology of Arabic as the language of religion and pan-Arab culture to support themselves and their views.

Chapter 3: “The weak in the first, is weak in the second language”

In the previous three chapters, I outlined the history and actor-networks of the Qatari state’s “knowledge economy” project and some of the debates that it has brought up among Qataris and expatriates living in Doha about English and Arabic. I demonstrated how the creation of actor-networks of education reform in Qatar has shifted focus from Arabic to English in schools and the economy by de-localizing English and placing Arabic on a development hierarchy. The result has been a pushback from Qataris to evaluate and mitigate the effects of Qatar’s new educational system on Arabic language and Qatari cultural identity. These narratives have highlighted the power of English and Qatari Arabic in creating “Qatari” and “International” citizens, but they have only touched upon the language ideologies associated with Standard Arabic or fusha. The following three chapters delve into the question of how proponents of fusha create a space for the language by framing it against English and dialects of Arabic. While some have argued that the “failure” of Arab societies to modernize is linked to its dependence on fusha, a language they argue no one speaks, I contend that this argument rises from a simplified understanding of religion and its opposite, the secular, and from languages as either literate or oral, not simultaneously capable of co-existing (Haeri 2003; Salameh 2010). It also rests on the idea that modernity is a way of life, rather than a series of projects that attempt to disconnect nature and language from society (Bauman and Briggs 2003; Latour 1991).

This chapter is based on interviews and observations of Arabic teachers in Qatar's K-12 schools who view their own Arabic language practices as relational and social and see Arabic language use and literacy as directly affected by changes to the economic values of Standard English and Standard Arabic in Qatari society. Street (2003) argues that "the ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new learners and their position in relations of power" (78). Street gives the term "social literacies" to this process, which holds true for students, teachers and administrators in Qatar who have to interact and respond to efforts on the part of the government to create a "knowledge economy." What gets relayed through social literacies and language ideologies is the message that English is a valuable commodity in Qatar's "knowledge economy" project, while Arabic is relegated to the realm of religion and culture.

In order to respond, these individuals who are given the responsibility of teaching literacy in a Standard Arabic, must use the most persuasive language ideologies they have in convincing others of the value of this Arabic. This is the ideology of Arabic as the language of Islam and the epitome of Arab culture. Why does this ideology of language resonate with Arabic teachers as opposed to the one Haeri proposes is the real "mother tongue" of Arabs (their dialects)? It is because there is no desire to distinguish between literary and oral Arabic within the lives of Arabic teachers I interviewed and observed. These individuals saw no conflict between fusha and their dialects of Arabic because they were both integrated into their lives and speech communities through a variety of oral and literary forms. While Qatari Arabic was used for conversation, Standard Arabic was used to listen to news, for prayers, honorifics,

reading Qur'an and for oratory. As Shirley Brice Heath has noted so eruditely, "literacy has different meanings for members of different groups, with a corresponding variety of acquisition modes, functions and uses; these differences have yet to be taken into account by policy-makers" (1986:25). As we will see in the following schools and experiences of Arabic teachers, the policymakers of Qatar's school system are disconnected from the ways in which literacy is engaged with by Qataris and Arabs. By imposing the "knowledge economy" as a model of education, schools are now focused on the autonomous model of literacy promoted by organizations unfamiliar with Qatari society and language. As shown in the previous chapter, the result is organizations such as RAND misunderstanding the relationship Qataris have to Arabic.

I start with a background on Arabic teachers in Qatar and then turn to the story of Ikhlas, one of my major interlocutors in Qatar, and her experiences as an Arabic teacher living and working in Doha all her life. Then I break down schools in Qatar according to their status within the "knowledge economy," looking first at the independent and ministry schools designed to fit into the evolving actor-networks of the "knowledge economy" and then at so-called "international" institutions such as Qatar Academy and American School of Doha and then to newer private schools competing for Qatari students and the government money that comes with their enrollment. I conclude with an analysis of why Arabic teachers are returning to the Ministry of Education curriculum and style of teaching Arabic, despite the "caution" of RAND to distinguish teaching Arabic from religion.

Between the Local and the Global: Arabics Regional Flows

Qatari and Non-Qatari Arabic teachers in public and private schools find themselves in an interesting position between the “global” and the “local”, as they are often from regional states which share a long history of Islam and Pan-Arab nationalism with Qatar. In schools throughout Doha, you will find Arabic teachers who are pushing their students to speak, read and write in standard Arabic, the language of the Qatari state and its official religion (Islam), while teaching and conversing in their own regional dialects. They face the knowledge that Arabic is less and less important in Qatar as institutions of schooling have progressively increased their English language programs and curriculums while decreasing instruction in Arabic. At any given Arabic department, Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese, Moroccans and Tunisians support the education and instruction of standard Arabic, or fusha. Teachers of Qatari nationality are usually to be found in the public/charter schools and at Qatar University. Communication between these Arabs from various nations is made possible by their shared knowledge of Standard Arabic. The range of dialects in Arabic are crosscut by the use of vocabulary from fusha and sometimes it is necessary to ask someone what they mean by a particular word or to repeat themselves because the word in the dialect means something different to both individuals. In the regional flows of Arabic, Egyptian and the Levantine dialects are more easily understood due to their use in media and film, while Moroccan, Tunisian and Sudanese Arabic requires tapping into the shared vocabulary of fusha to be understood.

As noted in the introduction, Arabs from Egypt, Jordan and Palestine have played influential roles in developing Qatar's Ministry of Education curriculum and continue to be teachers throughout school system. Johara related in a conversation that after a period of Egyptian dominance, many Palestinians and Jordanians came to teach and work in the schools of Qatar (Field Notes March 8, 2010). Today, there are increasing numbers of Tunisians and Moroccans in Qatar who work in the education and media sectors, doing translation and teaching. The religious networks across the Arab and Muslim world also support the immigration of Arabs and Muslims to be *Imams* (prayer leaders and caretakers of the mosque) and teachers in the religious schools throughout Qatar. These individuals are required to be *hafiz* of the Qur'an, meaning that they have dedicated the religious text to memory, and have sufficient training in the religious sciences of *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *hadith* (the life and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) and Islamic history. While many Arabs fill these roles throughout the city, there are a number of Pakistanis and Bangladeshies who serve smaller mosques. They reflect the non-Arab Muslim population in Qatar that is engaged in learning and teaching Arabic for primarily religious purposes. The Sudanese and Muaritanian communities also play a significant role in the religious institutions of the country and the police force. These trends have their roots in historical patterns of relations between the Gulf and other parts of the world, but they also reflect the networks of relationships and kinship through which migration normally occurs.³²

³² In Khalaf and AlKhobeisi's 1999 article, they relate the story of one such immigrant from Egypt, Ahmed, who travels to the United Arab Emirates and brings along with him two of his brothers. He becomes a teacher in the Ministry of Education and makes money through private tuition only be caught, fired and sent home. But through use of various networks and friendships made while in the UAE, Ahmed is able to come back and work in a rural

With the institution of Qatarization policies, schools funded by the government are increasingly favoring Qatari citizens for positions that were once held by non-Qatari Arabs. The network of migration and interaction between Qatar and neighboring Arab states is also facing competition from migrants from predominantly western states. At the Gulf English School, teachers from regional Arab state were paid a third of the salary of their colleagues from western states such as America, Britain, Australia and South America. This produced inequality between these populations in the school and resulted in unspoken animosity between some Arabic teachers and English teachers. One of my colleagues would complain about the ways in which the Arabic teacher for her class would teach and discipline the students, saying that she just sat in her chair and yelled at the kids the whole class period. One can understand why Arabic teachers might feel less motivated if they knew they were being paid much less than their English speaking colleagues. This is a blatant problem identified by a student at Qatar Academy, Abdullah. In this response to questions about Arabic teachers at his school, he writes:

My teachers are... well they make the curriculum (they actually take extracts from the Qatar curriculum). There is no Arabic IB (International Baccalaureate) curriculum. **We have Semi-qualified Arab teachers.** What I mean by semi-qualified is that even though they are excellent they do not have the skills such as the remaining teachers to fit the picture of a prestigious school. **In Arabic we are usually treated/assessed differentially than all of our other subjects.** [Correspondence, August 8, 2007, emphasis added]

town away from the officials at the MOE. Ahmed is able to make a much better salary than in his home country and takes on extra (official) work in an illiteracy campaign in the rural village. There are several other stories in Khalaf and Alkhobeisi's article which detail the large network and support structures of immigrants in the Gulf who have to use various strategies in order to circumvent some of the laws and regulations of labor. The situation is very similar to that of Qatar, in which these "guest" workers often become permanent residents and are able to bring many family and friends to live with them if they are financially successful. This is more often the case for Arabic speakers, although also possible for individuals from various ethnic and national communities.

In the longer interview, Abdulla states that Qatar Academy is an English school, which explains its lack of focus on Arabic. He also describes his fellow students as very limited in their knowledge and functional usage of Arabic in the classroom. As he writes above, this is mainly to do with the poor quality of Arabic instruction. Abdulla also notes that “Arabic is not a priority, but angry parents are making it one” (Correspondence, July 8, 2007).

Abdulla’s thoughts on Arabic teachers are important in the context of regional and global flows that are bringing non-Qataris into the country to support the schooling of Arabic and English. In another response, he notes that Qatari students cannot read and write Arabic and have to sound out letters slowly.

I did not learn English in my first school (I was in Iraq) but I have been learning English since Grade 3. I am very fluent in Arabic, whether it is reading or writing or speech. Most of my fellow classmates do not, regardless of nationality. For example, when reading, they spell out the words. So when reading most of them read like this: Çáá-ã-ĩ-Ñ-Óâ--É . I do not know whether you know Arabic but it is something like this: s-cc-ho-aoo-l, some even worse. In writing, the worse of my classmates produce unreadable work (with words that are not Arabic nor English nor anything.)

Abdulla highlights one of the major challenges that teachers are facing with students in Qatar. Many are unable to read and write in either English or Arabic after several years of schooling. Although parents, students and teachers in the following chapter recognize the importance of Arabic literacy, they are contending with many challenges, the primary being the prioritization of English over Arabic. In order to support their profession and Arabic, teachers such as Abed Shukri, a Palestinian Arabic teacher at Gulf English School are arguing that, “the weak in the first language, is weak in the second.”

Hierarchy of Schools in Qatar

Within the actor-networks described in the previous chapter, private schools are the most important sources of the “human capital” required for the “knowledge economy.” As noted by Kim, from Georgetown admissions, Qatar Academy was specifically created to teach the children of Qatar’s elite. In the following diagram, private schools such as Qatar Academy and the more expensive American School of Doha are at the top of the private school branch of Qatar’s education system. At the bottom are all-Arabic Ministry of Education schools, which from 2004-2012 were slowly closed down and turned into independent schools (at the time of my research there were several ministry schools still open). In the middle are the new independent schools which are operating with a bilingual curriculum and a predominantly Qatari population of students and teachers. Private schools are connected to the growing “knowledge economy,” in that their growth has coincided with the increase in expatriate population and the education reforms of the most recent Qatari government.

On the public school side is the term pan-Arabism, to denote both the historical movement in the region that coincided with the creation of public education and the population of Arab expatriates who came to Qatar to help develop it. Demographically, the independent and ministry schools in Qatar are attended by Qatari youth and mainly employ Qataris to teach major subjects. In the shift to the independent school model, native English teachers were sought after to teach the new math, science and English curricula. One of my closest colleagues at Gulf English School left the private school to work at a new independent school because the salary was so appealing. Native English speakers were given around \$4,000

a month to teach at Qatar's new independent schools (Fieldnotes April 12th, 2010). There is a fourth type of school in Qatar which I did not focus on, but did encounter several individuals who worked or attended these schools. These are the "community" schools which serve expatriate populations and use the curriculum of their home countries to teach subject matter. This diagram does not include the programs run by the *Awqaf*, the endowments supported by the charitable contributions of Muslims. The *Awqaf* is responsible for programs throughout the country that teach Qur'anic literacy and memorization. These services are provided almost free to the general public.

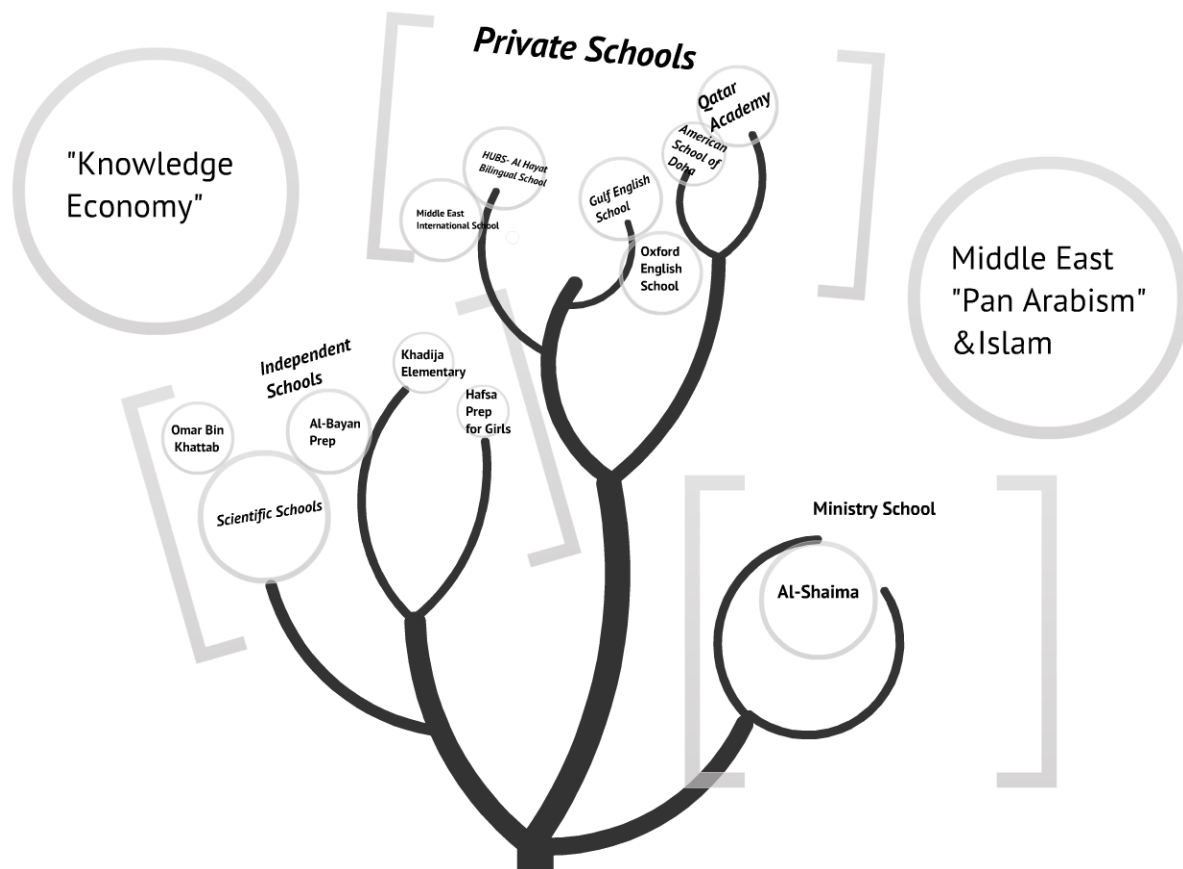


Figure 11: Hierarchy of Schools in Qatar

Hazawi of Ikhlas and the “Big Failure” of Independent Schools

I met Ikhlas through Maryam Al-Attiya, whose family used Ikhlas as a private Arabic tutor. Ikhlas was my Arabic tutor, interlocutor and friend for the duration of my field research in Doha. I would tutor her children in English in exchange for free tutoring in Arabic. Ikhlas’s family is originally from Syria, but she was born and raised in Doha and considers herself to be settled in the country. Her husband is Lebanese and she has four children. She attended Qatar University and has her Bachelor’s in Arabic and over 15 years of teaching experience in Qatar’s ministry and independent schools. Over the course of two years, Ikhlas had received a promotion and a raise to become the *munasikat al lugat al arabiya* “منسقة اللغة العربية” (Arabic Language Coordinator) at her school. She and her family moved from a run-down two bedroom apartment in the city to a brand new two floor townhouse, which she shared with her brother and his family.

Over tea and biscuits, I would talk to Ikhlas about her work as a teacher in Qatar’s public schools and how she felt the children were doing. Ikhlas complained regularly about student’s inattention, her pinching, reprimanding and punishing of her male students (she taught at a boy’s school) and her general ennui about attempts to change the system and styles of teaching.³³ She routinely disparaged her children’s English skills, saying that they had not improved at all since I last tutored them and that the schools were doing a horrible job of

³³ All government schools in Qatar are segregated by gender. There are male complexes and female complexes that serve K-12 and also individual K-6 and high schools throughout the city.

teaching the children English. On most Saturday mornings we would gather together and I would help the girls with their homework - a total of three - Maryam, the daughter of Ikhlas, and Sara and Maysoon, the daughters of Rima (Ikhlas' sister-in-law). The materials sent from school were usually packets stapled together of materials as a result of the new standards based model imposed by the Supreme Education Council and RAND.

The children seemed to find the most pleasure in playing or fighting with each other, visiting their neighbors and playing outside. Ikhlas, usually tired from working, would force the children to finish their homework before enjoying other activities such as playing computer games or watching cartoons. Ikhlas hated the lack of discipline she saw in her own children and those at school, but she herself seemed to enjoy similar activities to those of the children; spending time chatting with friends, watching Syrian dramas, drinking tea, preparing dinner and going out to run errands. She never refused a visit from me if she was home and would seem most comfortable sitting on the sofa, relaxing after work. I never witnessed her pleasure reading or engaged in literacy events outside of homework and the occasional Qur'an memorization, which the children engaged in, although she could have been reading at other times when I was not present.

Ikhlas had chosen to place Duha, the youngest, in a new English medium school (Oxford English School) near her home. Duha, according to Ikhlas, had the best English of her children and was doing better academically. She would say of Duha that *"tariff taqra, tariff taktub wa tariff tatakallam"*, that, "she knows how to read, write and speak" English well. Omran, her youngest son who attended the school she works at (Omar Bin Khattab), was also first in his

class, but Ikhlas wasn't sure if the teachers' were correct in their assessment, "I don't know why, he never studies. If Omran is first, then there must be something wrong with the school". According to Ikhlas, the students in the independent schools were not very good at English or Arabic. She placed the blame on the children and their parents saying, "The kids these days are not well behaved, they have no discipline. You can't hit them, you can't touch them, you can't yell at them - they say I will call the *majlis al a'la* (Supreme Education Council) and tell them, even the parents are not well-mannered (*mu'adib*)" (Fieldnotes, April 2, 2007 and November 2009).

Throughout my conversations with Ikhlas regarding the public schools and the status of Arabic within them, Ikhlas maintained that the reform movement and the independent schools were *fashl kabeer*, or "a big failure." The major problem that she and other teachers would note is that the reforms were ineffective in providing the quality education promised. For Arabic teachers, it would be alright if their students (and children) were learning English, but that didn't appear to be the outcome. Perhaps because she is an Arabic teacher, Ikhlas was worried that she could not provide her children training in the language of the "knowledge economy." She could, however, provide them with access to the literacy practices that are important for Arabs: basic reading and writing in Arabic, memorization of the Qur'an and spoken fluency in a dialect of Arabic. Ikhlas did not see these literary and oral practices in Arabic as incongruous (as the RAND writers would), because they were normative language and literacy ideologies in her community.

Ikhlas's networks illustrate the ways in which Arabic teachers are adapting to the changing models of education in Qatar. She and her family have been successful at finding ways to build professional, cultural and economic connections in Qatar. This has depended on partnerships with Qataris over their shared Arabic and Islamic roots both in schools and in homes, through private tutoring. Ikhlas's home environment is similar to the living rooms observed by Heath in Trackton in which literacy events were the primary areas around which reading and writing occurred (1983). A literacy event is described by Heath as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes" (93). The children and the adults in Ikhlas's home were rarely found reading and writing for pleasure, but more often as a result of homework, school announcements or doctor and medical slips. Homework was a painful chore and a source of strain between Ikhlas and her children.³⁴ The most recurring use of literacy was in cell phone use and reading television subtitles (in Arabic), although many programs were dubbed. Heath does not distinguish between literate and oral societies, but argues that individuals and communities have different practices which engage each linguistic method variably. I found this to be the case in Ikhlas's home and several others I visited. In addition to homework, the most active use of Arabic literacy was in Qur'an reading. The children were required to read and memorize sections of the Qur'an for lessons with their teacher at a local mosque.

Ikhlas's home life intersected easily with her role as a teacher in the independent schools. The majority female Arabic teachers I interviewed were able to create a comfortable

³⁴ McDermott, Goldman and Varenne (1984) wrote about the ways in which successful completion of the homework assignment often caused strain in families they observed. The desire to meet the standards set by the school and the teacher forced children and parents into an anxious and repetitive cycle.

continuum between home and the public school system (ministry and independent). Part of this comfort was in the predominance of Arab and Islamic cultural norms. In the public schools, Arabic is still widely used and gender segregation allows female teachers to remove their outer garments and hijabs in the school building. While English is being pushed in the new “knowledge economy”, Arabic is still the major language spoken throughout public schools. In the transition from ministry to independent schools, this Arabic language environment has not changed, but in the increasing emphasis placed on English literacy has not left these teachers untouched. As seen in Ikhlas’s case, she wants her children to have access to the economic benefits that are being connected to knowledge of English in Qatar’s economy.

Hazawi of the Public Schools: Ministry, Scientific and Independent

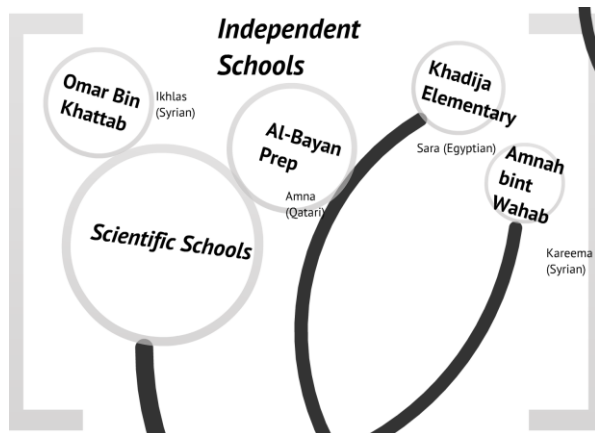


Figure 12: Independent Schools I visited

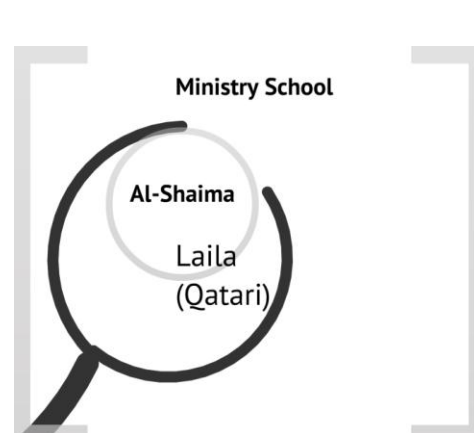


Figure 13: Al-Shaima was closed down in 2010

The complexity of Qatar’s current schooling system lies in the transition from the Ministry of Education, whose history is outlined in chapter one, to the system of privately run, but publically funded schools called Independent schools, which are overseen by the Supreme Education Council and are viewed as central to the “knowledge economy”. This movement

began with a set of schools called Al Bayyan and Omar bin Khattab Scientific schools, the former for girls and the latter for boys, which were magnet schools that took the best students and prepared them for jobs in medicine, science, engineering and technology. The demand for these schools was high and it coincided with the government's desire to create a "world-class" education system, resulting in the new system of independent schools (Brewer et al. 2003). This section details five schools across the public school range: one ministry school (Al Shaima), two scientific schools (Al Bayyan and Omar bin al Khattab) and two independent schools (Amnah Bint Wahab and Khadija Elementary). Each is known for excellence in its own ways - Al Shaima having excelled in Arabic language education, the two scientific schools being known for their ability to graduate students who can enter Education City schools, and the independent school of Amnah bint Wahab falling somewhere in the middle. The following pictures highlight the difference between the Al Shaima, a ministry school, and Al-Bayan, a scientific school.



Figure 14: Entrance to Al-Shaima, picture taken by Author



Figure 15: Hallways of Al-Shaima

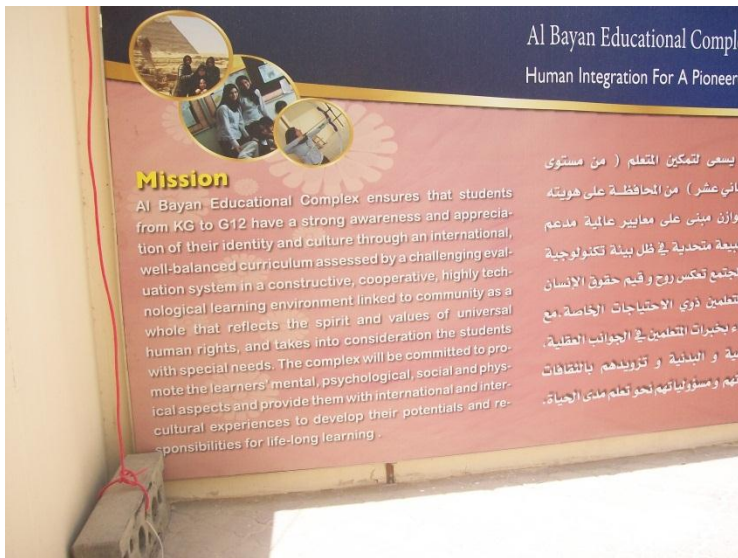


Figure 16: Entrance to Al-Bayan



Ministry School: Al-Shaima Preparatory School for Girls

The contrast between the science schools of Al Bayyan Preparatory and the older ministry of education school, Al Shaima was stark, especially as they are neighbors from one another. At the older Shaima Preparatory School, which was due to close down in a few months, the walls were littered with Arabic sayings from the Qur'an, poetry and other literature. It was difficult to find a word of English anywhere, although I did find some pieces written by students in English. This school was in its last year as a Ministry school and would be transformed into an Independent school the next year. Students and staff would be redistributed amongst the other independent schools. It would open again under the independent school model and with a new name and principal in a year or so.

I found an elderly Qatari woman in the secretary's office. When I explained that I would like to speak to the Arabic staff, she led me through the school's campus to the library. Laila, the head of the Arabic department had been designing and pushing forward different projects and competitions to encourage students to develop Arabic. Laila was luckily in school at the time, as she informed me that she had just returned from nursing her daughter. Laila informed me of the regional award the school had received several years ago for being one of the best schools in the region. The library was filled with several women from different backgrounds, some Qatari and others Jordanian and Egyptian, who had discarded their *abayas* and wore skirts and blouses. I sat with the Arabic teaching staff and we discussed the changes that would take place in the school

and those that were taking place throughout Doha. Overwhelmingly, the teachers felt that Arabic should be emphasized more, but that the economy and the government were pushing for changes that were considered essential to Qatar's future. The women were ambivalent about the changes, feeling they were inevitable and that there was nothing for them to do but be subject to them. One woman said, "That's just the way things are going. The government wants it that way". As Al-Shaima was being shut down, these women had resigned themselves to the changes in the schooling system. [Fieldnotes, April 20, 2010].

Al-Bayan Scientific School for Girls

Right next door to Al-Shaima is Bayan Scientific School for Girls. Bayan is in a brand new building with signs that welcome you to the world of bilingual education. The school is known for excellent test results in all subjects, including Arabic, and recently received the "Excellent School Award" in 2011 (SEC Website).³⁵ When I walked into the school and entered the secretary's office, I was asked by the principal about my affiliation with Georgetown University. She was interested in having her son attend Georgetown and had been trying to get contacts which would help his way in. When I suggested the Admission's office, she dismissed it, implying that she wanted inside connections which would help her son. The principal spoke to me in English and once she realized I could not help her, left abruptly. I then met with Amna, in her early 20s, who was the head of the Arabic department. She spoke to me in Standard Arabic and shared with me her strategies and concerns about teaching Arabic in Qatar's schools. Amna from Al Bayyan was very positive about the direction of the reforms and felt that she could teach her students Arabic very well as long as she used the best teaching techniques and had high standards. She liked the direction of the reforms and felt many teachers complained too much about them. In regards to her students she said "they learn Arabic very well here because we use a lot of different techniques, such as writing competitions. While some Arabic teachers say that students don't care, I think it is the teacher's responsibility to make the subject more interesting." Being a teacher at a scientific magnet school, Amna probably has the advantage of teaching students who are already used to doing very well in their subjects. [Fieldnotes, April 20, 2010]

In these vignette's, developed from field notes that I took of my visits to these schools, I want to illustrate the vision of the "knowledge economy" in its most contrasting pair. Al-Shaima represents the older ministry school in its heyday. Al-Bayan is a magnet school which

³⁵ The admissions director at Georgetown SFS-Qatar also told me that most of the students who come to Education City schools from public schools attend Al Bayyan or its male counterpart, Omar bin Khattab, because they are schools that focus on teaching math, science and technology in English. The Arabic teacher at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar also said that these individuals' Arabic was very good, especially in comparison to the students from private schools

graduated students who could attend Education City schools and English schools abroad (if these young women were permitted by their parents). Al-Bayan had a principal eager to send her son to an Education City school and an Arabic head teacher who felt that with enough effort, students could be taught the necessary Arabic and English skills to be “global” and “Qatari” citizens. In contrast, the older teachers at Al-Shaima were resigned to the reforms, seeing them as inevitable and a sign of the new direction of the country, in which their involvement was uncertain. Many of these teachers would be unemployed in the coming year and be supported by the Central Fund, called the *band al markazi*, in which they would be paid a regular salary to receive training in the new curriculum standards and technology, and then potentially reinstated, into a new independent school. This was the Qatari government’s strategy for reducing resistance to the reforms on the part of teachers and staff. In the following three independent schools, which are in the middle of the reform process, teachers are struggling with the demands to teach both English and Arabic through a standards based model and are finding ways to incorporate Islamic and Arab identity into the language arts curriculum.

Independent School: Amnah Bint Wahab Preparatory School for Girls

The hallways of Amnah bint Wahab were filled with young Qatari women in black *abayas*. Some students were asking a woman in an *abaya* and *niqab* questions about the upcoming Arabic exam. Amnah bint Wahab had the reputation of being a good school. I met with the head of the Arabic department and two of her staff who shared the demands of an Arabic teacher at the school and in the new Supreme Education Council. Karima was of Syrian origin, but had worked in Qatar’s school system for over two decades and was now responsible for training other Arabic teachers through the Supreme Education Council. She and her colleagues had developed their own Arabic textbook based on the Arabic language standards published by RAND and SEC. Ms. Jamilah was confident that Arabic would continue to be an important part of the public

schools curriculum and felt that it could be the medium of teaching math and science. “Wasn’t Arabic the language of math and science during the time of the Abbasids and Umayyads and in the Middle Ages?” Jamilah had to leave for a meeting at the SEC, but introduced me to two of her Arabic teachers, Reem and Lulwa. They told me stories about students who did not take their lessons seriously, often coming late or not coming at all. Lulwa asked me rhetorically, “isn’t Arabic the language of the Qur’an” and “don’t Arabs and Muslims have the responsibility of learning and protecting the language?”. In addition, they felt there was too much emphasis given to English in the school at the expense of Arabic. “Students are busy studying for tests in math, science and English and getting ready to take SATs and TOEFL” said Reem. Many of the young women at Amnah bint Wahab would go on to both Qatar University and Education City schools in the country [April 4th, 2010].

Scientific School: Omar Bin Khattab Elementary School

The last school I would like to describe is Ikhlas’s school, Omar bin al Khattab. The day I visited, classes had ended and the students were running around in the open space meeting area, twirling their bags and laughing, running everywhere. Outside, cars were lined up waiting for the kids to emerge. Nannies from various countries and mothers entered the school to receive the children. Drivers, mainly South Asian, were waiting outside in large sedans and land cruisers. I had been sitting in the reception area of the school when a Qatari mother walked up and told the receptionist - “I have an appointment - I’m late for my meeting. Why are the kids taking so long?” The mother also asked the receptionist for water. The receptionist gave the woman a look to say that she did not know why her child was late and that was not her responsibility. The mother began to get very upset with the woman for not respecting her. “Lesh ta’akharat? Why are you delaying? I have an appointment with the doctor.” Things escalated as the mother began to yell at the young woman calling her “ya haiwana, inti haiwana”(you animal, you animal) and was moved to the principal’s room where the mother continued to scream and the young woman continued to stand her ground that she would not speak to the woman unless she treated her with respect.³⁶

Ikhlas ignored this scene, telling me it was a common occurrence and that parents often disrespected teachers and staff, and we continued upstairs to the Arabic teacher’s room where she asked me to introduce myself and what I was doing. I then spoke with some of the Arabic teachers and assistants at the school about education reform and how they used to teach - and what it was like when they were students in Qatar’s schools. The most senior teacher who had taught in the old Ministry system for many years told me that “the education is going in circles - it is beginning to return to the ministry

³⁶ "هي ما بتكلم معي هيك- أنا ما باتكلم معها- لازم احترام- غير أخلاق ما في أخلاق" *he'a ma bi'tkalam ma3i heik, ana ma bit'kalam maha- lazim ihtiram, gair akhlaq, ma fi akhlaq*. Translation: “She can’t talk to me like that. There should be respect. There are no manners, she doesn’t have any manners.”

system again.” She argued that the reform was going to go back to the old system because it worked. Ikhlas was proud of her team of teachers and felt they were doing the best job they could of teaching students. Many of the teachers felt that the move towards English was important, but not well done and that students were not being given good skills in either English or Arabic. During the discussion, I asked if they felt parents care about teaching Arabic to their kids. Although Ikhlas felt that the parents cared much more about Arabic than English, several of the Qatari teachers defended the Qatari parents and said that they did care about Arabic, but they also wanted to teach their children English [Field Notes May 2nd, 2010].

Independent School: Khadija Elementary

I visited Khadija Elementary after school had ended on a Wednesday afternoon. I met with the Principal of the school who responded to my research with the information that the school was asking for longer hours of instruction in Arabic for the coming school year and that the Supreme Education Council was responding to concerns on the part of parents that Arabic and Islamic Studies were being reduced in the curriculum. I then proceeded to the teacher’s meeting room where I met with four teachers from various parts of the Arab world. Two were from Jordan, one was Egyptian and the last was an Emirati woman who had married a Qatari and had settled in Qatar with her husband. The teachers were meeting to discuss the upcoming end of the year ceremony. The English language teachers (one of the Jordanian women and the Emirati woman) were responsible for the part of the program in which students would have to sing a song in English. The Arabic teachers (one of the Jordanian women and the Egyptian woman) would choose a student each to recite Qur’an and greet the parents in Arabic. Following the meeting, I spoke with the Emirati teacher and the Egyptian teacher about my research and asked them some questions about the students. The Emirati teacher said that although she teaches English, she is very strict at home with her kids in Arabic. “We have a time in the family when everyone is only supposed to speak fusha (Standard Arabic). I love Arabic and I want my children to love it too.” The Egyptian teacher felt that the students were getting exposure to both languages at home and at the school. She believed, “it is the parents’ interest, if they focus at home on Arabic, then the child also focuses at school”. The Emirati teacher said, “It is important to teach English now, students have to get jobs and go to university in English. But we should also emphasize how important Arabic is”. The Egyptian teacher agreed, saying “English is important for kids to know, but we have to be proud of our Arabic and Islamic identity” [Field notes April 16, 2010].

Throughout my interviews with teachers at these public schools, there was a recurring theme of the importance of Arabic to Islam and Arab culture and the importance of English to future economic and educational success. Teachers at Amnah bint Wahab focused on Arabic as the ‘language of Qur’an” and Islamic history and teachers at Khadija Elementary felt that Arabic was a beautiful language with a rich heritage necessary of study. At Umar Bin Khattab, teachers felt that things were going back to the Ministry model of teaching Arabic instead of the Standards based one imposed by the SEC. This was similar to Jamilah’s approach at Amnah Bint Wahab, in which she and her colleagues created a textbook based on the standards which incorporated the older methods of the Ministry (using religious and cultural texts) with the required skill sets of the standards. While there as some disagreement on the part of Ikhlas and Qatari teachers on the role of parents in encouraging students to learn Arabic, the teachers above recognized that parents wanted both languages for their students, although English was taking more a priority because of the reforms, new testing requirements and the new universities in Qatar. Because of the reforms, testing has become a very important part of schooling and students are now ranked using “international” tests such as SAT, ACT, PISA and the TOEFL. Qatari test scores are very low when compared against students in other countries using the PISA test for literacy, math and science. Part of the problem is that many of these tests are translated into Arabic or left in English (math and science) and often reflects student’s literacy in English rather than their understanding of the content material. This is a widespread problem in using testing materials usually designed for a certain class and culture.

In regards to test scores and the new system of university education, those schools with history of testing in English and focus on math and science instruction in English, such as Al

Bayyan and Omar Bin Khattab, are successful at getting their students into English language universities with relatively strong Arabic skills. Schools such as Amnah Bint Wahab and Al Shaima reflect the historical relationship the school system in Qatar has had with a strong Arabic curriculum; therefore students from these schools sometimes test poorly in “international” tests given in English. This has more to do with what universities and programs the students will enter post-high school. If students intend not to go into higher education, but instead get married or work immediately after school, reading and writing in English is not a high priority. Those students who want to attend higher education in Qatar or abroad, must spend many more hours on improving their English language skills if they want to pass the TOEFL and SAT tests that are now required before entry into both Qatar University and the American universities in Education City.

Qataris who want to ensure that their children will get a “world class” education usually turn to private English schools in Qatar. While Arabic is slightly marginalized by the reforms to the public/independent schools in Qatar, in private English schools it is almost entirely neglected or ignored. Arabic teachers in private English schools are marginalized by the linguistic environment inside the school and by their reduced salaries and “prestige” in the “knowledge economy.” These teachers are often asked to teach both Arabic and Islamic Studies and are also very likely to use the ministry curriculum in their teaching. There is also a hierarchy of private schools similar to that of public schools, in which those schools which graduate students who can get into top tier American and British schools are considered the best.

Hazawi of Private and “International” Schools

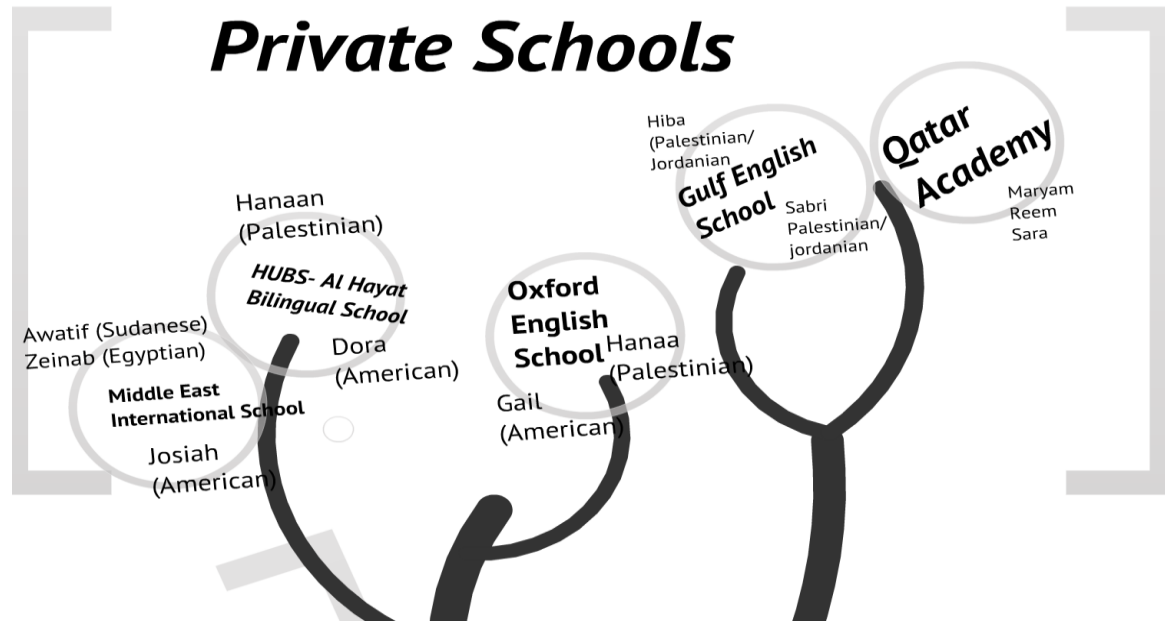


Figure 17: Arabic/Bilingual Schools to "International" Schools

The above diagram represents the hierarchy of private schools in the country which Qataris and wealthy expatriates send their children to. At the top right hand side is the “international” school model. These schools provide English language instruction at the hands of native speakers and foreign curriculums which will give students access to “international” education. In the middle lie schools which attempt to provide a synthesis of Arabic and Islamic education for Qataris along with solid English language skills. Many of these schools have been opened by wealthy Qataris who see a market for private English education with a Qatari and Islamic curricular component. On the left hand side are private schools which are also owned

by Qataris or Emiratis, but attended by a higher ratio of non-Qataris to Qataris because of their focus on bilingualism.³⁷

I will begin with the private ‘international’ schools of Qatar Academy and American School of Doha. These schools have a reputation of catering to two of the wealthiest populations in Qatar: the ruling Al-Thani family and American and British families who work in oil, gas, government and military sectors. This is followed by a set of schools which have a status of being “the best of the worst” in their deference to some elements of Qatari, Arab and Islamic culture. The last set of private schools are attempting to appeal to the market for “bilingual” education designed to give parents and students some “satisfaction” regarding Qatari and Arab culture and identity. Arabic instruction is least important in the first type of school and increasingly important in the latter two types of schools that attempt to balance the requirements for “world class” English language instruction with “local” demand for Arabic and Islamic studies instruction.

Hazawi of Private “International” Schools



Qatar Academy Mission Statement: It is the mission of Qatar Academy (QA) to provide internationally accepted, comprehensive, English medium programs, plus Arabic and Islamic Studies from pre-school through to secondary graduation. QA develops independent critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and responsible citizens and empowers students to gain entrance to

³⁷ There is a fourth category of schools which caters to non-Qataris and whose curriculums are based on a home curriculum. These are called “community” schools and are very nationally and ethnically segregated.

The school created to fit into Qatar Foundation's vision of a "knowledge economy" is Qatar Academy, which was intended to teach both children of expatriates (teachers and staff in EC schools) and Qatari students. It is located in the Education City campus and is supposed to be a major feeder school for the American universities in Qatar. In comparison to its counterparts in the next category of private schools, "the best of the worst," Qatar Academy has the support of the ruling family of Al-Thani who send many of their children there as the school was started by the Emir and his wife, Sheikha Mozah.

Notable for their poor or non-existent Arabic curriculums, private "international" schools like Qatar Academy are difficult to get admission to and serve the elites of Qatar, both national and ex-pat. Kim had enrolled her daughter at Qatar Academy when she arrived in Doha in 2006, but with the increasing numbers of Qataris, she felt the school climate had a negative effect on her daughter and she withdrew her.³⁸ She argued that Qatar Academy was not an "international" school anymore because it was being taken over by Qataris. While there is some controversy over whether Qatar Academy can be called an "international" school because of its heavy Qatari population, its status and placement in Education City is supposed to indicate its' focus on the "knowledge economy" and its global parameters.³⁹

³⁸ Children of wealthy expatriates, such as Kim in the last chapter, often send their children to other "international" schools such as Cambridge School, Doha English School and Doha College. These last three follow the British curriculum and represent the longer history the country has had with Britain and the British style of education.

³⁹ Several schools were opened recently by Qatar Foundation to increase "high quality" options for Qataris and expatriates. These are the International School of London, the Sherborne Academy and the Michael E. DeBakey School for Health Professionals, all of which were in the opening stages at the end of my fieldwork. The state has also started a voucher program based on RAND-Qatar's recommendations so that Qataris may send their children to these expensive private schools with government tuition support.

I had the opportunity to interview and meet teachers and students from Qatar Academy, Doha College and American School of Doha. The general consensus was that these schools did not put much time, effort or importance on learning Arabic, but offered excellent English language education and curriculums to get students into top notch universities abroad and in Qatar. Here are several written statements made by teachers at Qatar Academy in response to a survey:

It is unfortunate that **the focus in the household has become on teaching the child the second language (English) before (Arabic) and if it continues, the child will lose his mother tongue because of parental neglect.** [Interview with Reem, May 14, 2010]

The **focus on the English language in all the subjects** except the Arabic and Islamic education lesson leads to the lack of any support for the Arabic language outside the limits of the lesson and also sometimes creates students who have weaknesses. [Interview with Maysoon, May 12, 2010]

(Translated from Arabic)

Reem and Maysoon were respectively Jordanian and Palestinian and each had taught Arabic for over a decade. They shared concerns about the emphasis and support given to English in both the school environment and at home, arguing that this favoritism was making students “weak” in Arabic. They suggested several ways to combat this inequality, from pedagogical strategies to more time in the curriculum and to greater respect and emphasis on Arabic from parents. In my meeting with the Arabic head of the school, a Qatari woman with a long history in education, she emphasized that the school was trying to bring the Arabic level of their students up, but that it was challenging given the structures of the school around the English language curriculum. Like her colleagues, she felt that Qatari parents were more concerned that their children learn English well and get into English universities. At Qatar Academy’s high school, almost 80% of subjects were taken in English through the International Baccalaureate program.

In a discussion at Johara's home, a debate regarding the quality of private schools in Doha placed Qatar Academy behind that of the American School of Doha (ASD), particularly in its ability to graduate students who could go to private English universities abroad. Johara and her best friend Al-Anoud had both attended American School of Doha and Johara's sister, Layal, was still a student at the time. There are only a handful of Qataris at the ASD, whose population and teaching staff are predominantly American. Johara said, "Qatar Academy is not a very good school. Neither is the Middle East International." Al-Anoud disagreed, "No, Qatar Academy is a good school, and students who go there can go to universities in Great Britain and America." Layal added that "the American School is the best school in Doha. Doha College is also very good" (Fieldnotes, December 2, 2009). In a conversation with Johara and Mohammad, a distant relative of Johara's and current student at Georgetown SFS-Qatar, Muhammad shared his experiences learning Arabic at ASD: "There were several years in high school where we didn't have to take Arabic at ASD. This is why my Arabic is not very good" (Fieldnotes May 8, 2010).

The expectation was that students from these "international" schools would attend American Universities and therefore have very little need for Arabic literacy in higher education. The "international" was equated with successful acquisition of literacy in British or American English. Arabic in these schools was not deemed a priority. Students at "international" schools in Doha did not attend these schools in order to improve their Arabic literacy skills. Instead, the focus at these types of schools was on making students fluent in English literacy. Arabic teachers in these schools were heavily marginalized, reporting disinterest on the part of parents and students and poor wages.

“The Best of the Worst”: Gulf English School and Middle East International School

In the following set of schools, we encounter a focus on the part of owners, staff and teachers to create a sense of “security” in the Qatari and Arab identity while also teaching students English language skills. Having worked at Gulf English School (GES), I had several contacts and relationships which gave me access to the school and its English and Arabic staff. My closest friend, Gail, from my teaching days in 2005 had switched several schools during the course of my fieldwork. She left GES to work at an independent school in the outskirts of the city as the English language coordinator for a much higher salary. In an interview with Gail, she shared with me the sentiment of Qatari parents that GES was “the best of the worst” in that it provided a solid English education and created a comfortable culture for Qataris in their regards for gender segregation and their focus on Arabic and Islamic Studies. GES is owned by one of the richest men in Qatar and his influence and name recognition also provides some comfort to Qataris, like Dr. Al-Attiya from the previous chapter, who send their children to the school.

Although I was no longer teaching at GES, the female Arabic teachers remembered me when I returned for my fieldwork, especially Hiba who was the Arabic teacher for my class the year I was there. They asked me quite bluntly why I chose Qatar for my research site, implying that if I wanted to study Arabic, I should have picked a country where it was more widespread. The teachers were from Jordan, Egypt and Palestine. Here is an excerpt of the transcript of my conversation with them regarding Arabic language education at Gulf English School:

Hiba: We have mothers and fathers who aren’t remotely interested in Arabic
 Kauther: But there are some students, for whose family Arabic is the most important thing because **Arabic is the language of the Qur’an**

Hiba: There is a difference between Qatar and other countries

Kauther: They [Qatar] are most interested in English

Hiba: **The mother tongue in Qatar is English.** The first reason is because the number of Qataris is so small and in Qatar there are all these other nationalities. Qatar has become a foreign country. Go to the mall and they speak English. **Go to the street and they speak English and for that reason English has become more important than Arabic. Qatar is also a “model” (style). It is shameful to speak Arabic because it shows your station/level. There is a lot of “prestige”, you need to speak English- it’s what do you call it- “prestige”** [Interview, February 5, 2010] (Trans. from Arabic by Author)

Hiba and her colleagues continue onto talk about how little respect they get from their students, while the English teachers are treated with a sense of deference. They also mention the relative pay scales in contrast to their English speaking colleagues. They highlight how different life is in their home countries where everyone speaks Arabic and you really feel that it is an Arab country. In addition to the deference given to English in the curriculum and the relative staffing and pay scales at the school, the society outside the school is described as unfriendly and unfair to Arabic speakers. Hiba describes Qatar as a “model”, which in this context, means being stylish, unique, and high class, similar to a fashion model that everyone looks. Hiba also describes how speaking Arabic is almost considered shameful, reiterating Mimi’s sentiment of “estrangement” from chapter one. In conclusion, Hiba argues that speaking English gives one “prestige.” Notably, in talking about these new ideologies of English, Hiba uses the English words model and prestige.

Similar to Qatar Academy in the last section, the British administration at Gulf English School, although supportive of Arabic education because of the owners and the need to appeal to conservative Qataris, is more concerned with the “international” quality of the school. In an

interview, the Head of Secondary shared with me their efforts to draw more students from diverse backgrounds, or non-Qataris, to the school. They were also focusing on the International Baccalaureate program and publicizing GES as an “international” education that prepares students for “international” universities. There was a sense of competition with other private British and American schools, each vying for the prestige of an “international” school. As we will see in the next set of schools, “international” school status is also connected to how successfully graduates of these high schools fared on admissions tests and entrance into English language universities.

Middle East “International” School

At the Middle East International School (MEIS), I met Principal Josh Haggar, a former superintendent of schools in America, who had relocated to Qatar during the new reform process. He had experienced some fallout with the Supreme Education Council and was now working as a Principal at MEIS and a consultant for AMIDEAST (America-Middle East Educational and Testing Services, Inc.). Dr. Haggar traveled a lot and was working on a novel at the time. Like many wealthy expatriates, Dr. Haggar enjoyed the wealth and opportunity that living and working in Qatar afforded him. Dr. Haggar and the owner of the school, a Qatari business man, were heavily invested in creating an “international” school which promised the many things that the new school reforms were failing to deliver. When I met with Dr. Haggar, he emphasized how many seniors from MEIS were going to American universities and how well students were performing on “international” tests. “All of these kids - if they go to a US university they have to show proficiency in English. They have to take TOEFL to show English

proficiency.” He also told me that the owner of the school, Mr. Salem, “refuses to give the kids Arabic until first grade because of the importance of English.” Dr. Haggag connected this directly to the “knowledge based economy” concept which requires this focus on English. When asked about Arabic, Dr. Haggag would repeatedly say that the kids “spoke Arabic all the time”, implying that the concern was for the students to speak English as often and fluently as they spoke Arabic, but not on literacy in Arabic at the level being promoted in English (Interview, April 2, 2010). This focus in the school on English was confirmed by the Arabic teachers I interviewed at the school.

Awatif and Zahra were taking surveys that the SEC had sent to the school and met with me during their break period. Zahra said, “English takes first place in the school” and that up until last year, they only taught three lessons of Arabic and Islamic Studies a week. This year, they were increasing to four. “All of the subjects are in English” said Awatif. Since students don’t begin formal Arabic instruction until first grade at the school, Awatif shared a story of a little girl who was afraid of Arabic (the Standard variety) when introduced to it. They considered it a “shame upon the school” that Arabic was given such an insignificant role. Furthermore, Zahra mentioned that “parents thought it was easy to teach Arabic”, but it was actually very difficult for them as teachers to convey all the complexities of Standard Arabic in the few hours of instructional time given to the subject (Interviews April 2, 2010).

These teachers felt similar to their counterparts at GES about the ways in which the school and society was focusing on English over Arabic. As “first place” in the school, English was introduced to children in Kindergarten as their language of instruction and Arabic was

introduced in First Grade. While students spoke Arabic between class periods with one another, they were much more comfortable with their regional dialects of Arabic than with the Standard Arabic used for formal instruction. This is seen in the story of the little girl who was afraid when teachers began to speak to her in Standard Arabic in first grade. The fierce desire on the part of the administration to produce students who could attend American universities and engage the “knowledge economy” was very clear in the mission and curriculum of the school. They were actively adopting the ideology that English gave one access to the “international” and that Arabic was only useful as a spoken language of culture and the home.

Bilingual Schools Try to “Satisfy” Parents

In the last set of schools explored in this chapter, the “best of the worst” model is replaced by a focus on “bilingualism” and attempts to bridge the Arabic and English curriculums through staff and administration working together. At the following schools, English and Arabic teachers actually communicated with one another and were told by the administration to reconcile and bring together the traditions of English and Arabic so that students would have a stronger Arabic and Islamic identity while also building their English language schools. These last set of schools are the some of the newest to open their doors in Qatar and were operating in housing complexes. They were also distinguished by their unusual principals, one Palestinian and the other, an American convert to Islam.

Oxford English Academy

In order to provide a quality English education with an Arabic-Islamic cultural focus, Oxford English Academy (OEA) was opened. Many staff at Gulf English School broke away and joined the new OEA after several years of withstanding the school administration run by Sheikh Faisal's (the owner) wife (Interview Gail, September 8, 2009). OEA was providing education in grades one through four when I visited it in 2009 and 2010. It was placed on probation at the end of 2010 for failing to meet certain standards set by the Supreme Education Council. My friend Gail, who worked at GES and an independent school, ended up at OEA in 2009, following a very brief stint at an independent school. Hanaa, the head of Arabic while I taught at GES, also left to become the Principal of Oxford. While most of the English schools in Doha are operated by British and American principals, OEA has an Arab principal. Hanaa has been involved in the teaching of Arabic in schools throughout Qatar for decades and is fluent in English and Arabic. In my discussion with her about the decision to open up OEA, she mentioned the following:

I was with GES for 16 years and I communicated with parents. For parents, the key was to educate their children in **English, the language for the future, but they were also interested and keen to teach them the Arabic language.** They would always come to me and ask, "did you see this letter?" "What does it mean"? They were confused and they see me as the lady they can trust. They talk freely because I understand own culture, tradition and rules. I also understand western culture so I explain, 'she didn't mean it'. For this school, there is a satisfying feeling for parents. My target is to give opportunity to progress in English and maintain Arabic level. **Science says that if people speak properly their own language, they will learn second language better.** .. Time to time I make presentation about how to important Arabic language is. I try to show the whole picture, **that they will respect you if you respect your own identity.** [Interview, March 4, 2010]

In this excerpt, Hanna talks about her time at GES during which she came to be a support system for Qatari parents who didn't understand the cultural mores and language of the English teachers. She would explain to them what the teachers meant and because she understands English and western culture, this eased their minds. She took this experience to her new school, in which she wants parents to "have trust" and feel that the school understands and knows where they are coming from. A large part of accomplishing this is emphasizing the Arabic identity of students. It is also accomplished through a staff which is more Arab and Muslim than white and western. The majority of the teachers were either Arab, American Arabs or married to Arabs themselves. The success of the school has been undermined by the negative publicity mentioned earlier, which resulted in the school shutting down for a few weeks and then opening again. The leadership of OEA is attempting to bridge the gap between Arabic and English language education in Qatar by arguing that knowledge of the first language (Arabic) will help student's acquire English better.⁴⁰

Al-Hayat Bilingual Schools

The new Al-Hayat Bilingual Schools (HUBS) also had a vision of focusing on Arabic and Islamic identity, while providing a strong English language education. HUBS is a private venture on the part of a Kuwaiti psychologist and popular media figure, Ibrahim al-Sulaiti, and Raja Al-Saleh, a female Kuwaiti education specialist. I was friends with the Principal of HUBS, John, and asked if I could visit the school and meet with the Arabic teachers. John was excited about the

⁴⁰ Hanaa's emphasis on this point was reiterated by Abed Shukri, the director of Arabic as Second Language education and the IB Arabic curriculum at GES, and the female Arabic teachers at GES described above. Hiba and Kauther also agreed that the students who were weak in Arabic were also weak in English and students who were from bilingual households, meaning their mother or father was not Arabic speaking, had the most difficulty learning Arabic.

integration of a Canadian curriculum with the Arabic and Islamic Studies curriculum. Teachers at the school were encouraged to create a bilingual library and teach thematic units based on the Islamic calendar and important cultural and religious festivals. I met with both, the heads of Arabic and English at the school. Ms. Dalia, head of the English curriculum, shared with me that in order to achieve the bilingual vision of the school, “additional time was added onto the school day” and that they “make every effort to make sure every effort is bilingual”. Finally, she said that the attitude of the school is of “world globetrotters”, individuals who can travel and take from different cultures and places (Interview March 14, 2010).

When I met with Hanaan, the director of Arabic, she shared Ms. Dalia’s concern that students see Arabic as a very relevant and important part of the school. In order to accomplish that, she and her co-teachers were using technology, games and new strategies to make Arabic fun. But she felt that the home environment was central. Similar to her colleagues throughout public and private schools in Doha, she argued that, “interest in the home is the first thing”. She also agreed with Dr. Hanaa from Oxford that “cultural advancement” could not be achieved by using an “outside language” and that it was important to study and learn Arabic, “the language of the Noble Quran” (Interview March 17, 2010). This last sentiment was widely shared by the Arabic teachers I met. My conversation with Hanaan brought up many of the recurring complaints that Arabic teachers shared. That of disinterested students and parents and a status shift in which English had replaced Arabic as a “first” language although Arabic was the language of Islam, Arab culture and history.

I asked a friend of mine, Mena, who sent her children to HUBS about what she thought of the curriculum. This is her written response:

HUBS is not a bilingual school (despite their name). They follow the Qatari curriculum in both Arabic and Islamic Studies but only subjects. So the children take Arabic every day and also take Sharia (from a Qatari text) three times a week. It is better than most other schools here, but in my opinion the ideal school is like Al Bayaan in Kuwait or in Saudi which are truly bilingual. The children take English and three subjects taught IN English and then Arabic and three subjects taught IN Arabic. Only studying a language and studying IN a language can make you truly bilingual and not favoring either.

Mena took her children out of HUBS and placed them in the newly opened ACS Doha International School. Like many people throughout the city, Mena has always used private Arabic tutors to supplement her children's literacy skills in Arabic. Mena's comment sheds light on the importance of actually using Arabic to teach subjects, instead of relegating it to teaching Arabic language and Islam. She argues that it shows favoritism if you teach all subjects in English and only one or two in Arabic. Mena raises an important theme running throughout the reported experiences of Qatar's Arabic teachers. When the school system and society reduces the emphasis on Arabic literacy and increases the emphasis placed on English literacy, there is a clear devaluing of Arabic literacy practices. In order to defend Arabic, teachers turn back to the site of Arabic literacy and power, the Qur'an, religious traditions and political and historical texts about the power of the Arab and Islamic empire in the Golden Age of Islam.

Hizwi of Arabic and Islamic Studies Curriculum in Qatar's Schools

Numerous teachers I spoke to in Qatar's schools defined Arabic's importance by stating that "Arabic is the language of the Noble Qur'an." For these individuals, the Arabic language is intricately tied to the Islamic discursive tradition and its major text, the Qur'an. While the

formal curriculum of the former Ministry of Education focused on religious principles throughout the curriculum, the current policy makers at RAND and SEC have tried to narrow teaching religion to the Islamic Studies class. But religion continues to play a pivotal role in the promotion and encouragement of Arabic literacy. In the Arabic curriculum created by Dr. Jamillah and her colleagues at the Amna Bint Wahab Girls Preparatory School, they have placed chapters from the Qur'an in several important sections as primary texts to be studied to learn how to read and write in Arabic. Although this goes against RAND's suggestions to separate religion from the study of Arabic, the Arabic teachers at the school were primarily interested in creating a text which aligned with the value of Arabic literacy for their students. They felt that Qur'anic texts were the best way to both teach the Arabic standards and to produce the type of student that reflected the school's mission.⁴¹ They are not the only types of texts in the book, which include poetry, scientific and historical texts and newspaper articles, but they are prominent, leading each new section of the book. The introduction begins in the name of God and with blessings on the Prophet Muhammad, a typical religious introduction. It follows with this:

The Arabic language is the language of the Noble Qur'an, and we have taken it upon ourselves- the teachers of the Arabic language- the responsibility of transmitting it to the new generation in order to preserve its' beauty and its' splendor, this language was the language of science and literature on a world level once upon a time. **Since our students have changed their way of thinking and their way of life from those before them, it was necessary to develop the perspective of Arabic language and to modernize ways of presenting it without compromising its origins.**

⁴¹ Mission of the Amnah Bin Wahab Preparatory School for Girls: To prepare a generation of scholars (people of knowledge) supported by the standards... all of them female students... excelling in critical thinking skills... equipped with knowledge and skills... Adapting with the world of technological development... holding onto their religion and its civilizational value and the most excellent of character...ready to serve their community and their country...and carry the responsibility...able to communicate globally with different cultures... creative...enlightened...influential...and innovative. (trans. from Arabic by R.Asmi)

The introduction proceeds to outline the structure of the curriculum, which includes the different types of texts that are recommended by the Arabic language standards put forward by the Supreme Education Council. It also includes at the end a note on the development of Islamic and Arab character, nationalism and identity. This type of text and introduction is a common occurrence in Arabic language programming throughout the country, whether in public or private schools.⁴²

Increasingly in schools throughout Qatar, the Arabic and Islamic studies curriculums are the only spaces for teaching Arabic, which make it inevitable that there will be cross pollination as the same teachers teach both subjects and have to instill a sense of Arab, Muslim and Qatari identity into their students within the span of six hours a week. Add to this the responsibility of teaching grammar, syntax, vocabulary and critical thinking skills in a language which children don't always speak in their homes, and you can understand the reason why Arabic teachers draw upon whatever resources and support that religion provides to Arabic language instructors. While the Arabic teachers I interviewed are willing to move the teaching of Arabic into new forms and to use a variety of texts and skills, they are not willing to let go of the religious "origins" of Arabic literacy. In creating textbooks, curricula and advocating the Arabic language, the Arabic language teacher uses whatever resources and support he/she has

⁴² Another example of the tradition of beginning with Qur'an recitation occurred during an after school planning meeting for the end of the school year performance at Khadija Academy. The Arabic teachers were given the responsibility of starting the performances with Qur'an recitation. They had to decide which child would be best and which Arabic teacher would give the opening introduction. This would be followed by an English teacher and a performance of an English song by students. The teachers wanted to showcase how well their students knew both languages and Qur'an recitation was considered a strong way to represent to parents how students are doing in the Arabic classroom *and* in Islamic Studies.

available to make the study of Arabic important in their own eyes and in the eyes of students and parents. As witnessed in preceding chapters and within this chapter, the belief that Arabic is under attack by English, foreign language schools and the increasing presence of non-Arabs, requires that Arabic teachers and advocates be increasingly vigilante in their advocacy of fusha, through whatever means and discourses available to them.

Conclusion. “On Mother and Other Tongues”

In multilingual communities, it is challenging for any one language to meet the needs of all speakers. Arabic teachers recognize this dilemma and are attempting to make Arabic competitive and appealing to their students by utilizing Arabic’s connection to the Qur’an and by referring to Arabic as a “mother tongue.” At Qatar Academy, Reem argues that students will lose their “mother tongue” if parents continue to favor English over Arabic. At HUBS Bilingual and Amnah Bint Wahab, Arabic is a language capable of religious and scientific expression. For Abed Shukri and Hanaan, if you don’t learn your first language well, you won’t be able to learn a second language. Teachers at GES argue that although Arabic is the language of the Qur’an, English is now the “mother tongue” of Qataris. These views of Arabic and English are grappling with the introduction of English into the speech and language community in Qatar. Arabic teachers are aware that the balance of power is shifting towards English and they recognize the need to learn English. Many like Ikhlas, are sending their children to English language schools while maintaining the traditions of learning Arabic for Qur’an memorization and basic literacy.

Bentahila and Davies (1989; 1995; 2006) have conducted several studies of language among multilingual Moroccans. In their 1989 article, “On Mother and Other Tongues,” they

argue that the terms mother tongue and native language are too simplistic in dealing with the range of experiences that multilingual have with the different languages they use in their daily life. In addition to Bentahila and Davies, Bonfiglio (2010) extensively critiques the concept of a mother tongue and its emergence in Europe around ideas of fertility, mother's milk and the metaphor of a family tree. Bonfiglio argues that these attempts to connect one language to physical roots resulted in a history of racial and linguistic misunderstanding.

I bring up the terms mother tongue and native language because Arabic teachers use the idea that Arabic, as a mother or native tongue, should be favored over "other" languages. This is a popular idea and one that Haeri (2003) also uses to justify her argument that Egyptians should use their "mother tongue" Egyptian Arabic as the national language. The idea that that there is one language that is more worthy of being used, learned or taught because of its origin story is found throughout debates and discussions about all languages, but perhaps especially in the case of Arabic, which also has a unique connection to a religious text. For example, the authors of the Amnah Bint Wahab curriculum state, "it was necessary to develop the perspective of Arabic language and to modernize ways of presenting it without compromising its **origins**." Arabic, because of its relationship to the Qur'an has a very unique "origin" story, but it is not the same as that of the national languages that Davies and Bentahila and Bonfiglio have criticized. Its origin story is connected with the text/recitation of the Qur'an. This distinguishing feature makes it possible for the Qur'an to continue to have a prominent place in the teaching of literacy in Qatari society, despite it being a different dialect of Arabic than the one commonly spoken by Arabs today. This illustrates the complicated nature of giving one

language the title of “mother” or “native” tongue, because individuals can have more than one language with which they associate a feeling of ownership.

I would also argue that despite discussions about mother tongues among my interlocutors, Arabic teachers did not hold the belief that only one language could meet all of their needs. The approach that many teachers took to language was to accept that both Arabic and English were becoming a necessity to life in Qatar. Each of the school systems mentioned were moving progressively closer to teaching English prominently in their curriculums. The main area of contention arose when teachers felt that parents, the government and administrators were replacing Arabic with English, not if they were teaching both languages equally well to their children. This position reflects the normal condition of multi-lingualism within the speech community. Because Arabs speak and use different varieties of Arabic (Standard and spoken), they are more likely to adapt to another language in the speech community. But within the language community of schools, Arabic teachers take the responsibility of teaching Arabic very seriously and they utilize religious, scientific and cultural arguments to support Standard Arabic and their role as “teachers of the Arabic language.”

Chapter 4: Orality and Literacy in Qatari Higher Education

In this chapter on orality and literacy in Qatar higher education, I argue that the native Arabic speaker's perspectives on the diversity between the oral dialects and Standard Arabic literacy is one of acceptance of variation within the speech community coupled with a desire to improve the unity of the language community under the banner of fusha. This perspective is supported by ideologies of Arabic as primarily an oral language. A discussion of "speech community" and "language community" occurs in chapter one, but I will review the terms as they are essential to this chapter's main argument. A speech community exists when there are social norms, rather than linguistic forms, that define the boundaries of the community. A language community focuses on (a) language that is denotationally effective in referencing meaning within a community. The language community is more concerned with defining the parameters of language and what is "proper" or "good" language use, whereas the speech community is more interested in in-group, out-group variation.

Within the speech community in Qatar, Arabic dialects are used flexibly by speakers and there is an idea that oral and aural language is more important in the Arabic speech community. Within the language community in Qatar, the shift towards using "proper" or Standard English in schools and universities brings out already nascent issues in the acquisition of Standard Arabic. One such issue is whether Arabic has too wide a range between its literary and oral forms, a common argument in western literature on Arabic. My interlocutors are

struggling to find a resolution to the needs of diversifying speech and language communities in Qatar. While fusha is a recognized dialect of Arabic that has been used historically to standardize language in Qatar, English is beginning to take its place as the ideal standard language for higher education.

To begin, I provide a review of higher education institutions in Qatar and their development under the “knowledge economy” model. Following this, I delve into the experiences of a group of Arabic teachers researching Arabic language education in Qatar from a pedagogical perspective. Their students also reflect upon the differences between Qatari Arabic and Standard Arabic, arguing that Arabic is primarily an oral language. This ideology of Arabic absolves these individuals of acquiring literary Arabic, because they find it easier to speak Qatari Arabic. These teachers and their student’s experiences are juxtaposed against the national university, QU, where an Arabic language program designed for “non-native speakers of Arabic” raises a related set of questions about the difficulty of using literary Arabic within the speech community in Doha. In the last section, I relate the emergence of a hybrid language within the Qatari speech community, called Arabizi that incorporates Standard English, spoken Arabic dialects and Standard Arabic. This again brings up questions of Standard Arabic’s ability to be relevant and useful in the daily lives of Arabic speakers. I return to my argument that Arabic speakers in Qatar are aware of and accept the divergence between Arabic dialect and the register of Standard Arabic within the speech community, but are increasingly finding it to difficult to hold onto this variability in the face of English’s successful rise as a Standard Language of literacy in Qatar’s language community. There is a desire, on the part of teachers in higher education, to find practical pedagogical solutions to the dilemma of fusha’s

competition with English in the language community, but this requires challenging English's status as the ideal standard language of the language community.

Background on Higher Education in Qatar

At the university level, Qatar's language problem becomes compressed as children from public, private and community schools are channeled into a handful of universities.⁴³ Prior to the creation of Education City and the incorporation of private American universities in Doha in 2002, higher education options consisted of Qatar University, the national university, and a few small programs such as the Qatar Aeronautical College (previously the Civil Aviation College of the Gulf States). Many elites send their children abroad to university and the children of the royal family, who are expected to serve the state, are sent to military colleges in Britain.⁴⁴ Across the region, it is popular to send children of the ruling family or monarchy to prominent U.S. and British universities for training.⁴⁵

The national university was created in 1973 by Emiri Decree from Khalifa bin Hamad Al Thani, followed some 22 years later by a decree from his son Hamad to create Qatar Foundation and Education City. These two institutions now regulate the majority of higher education instruction in the country with the new Houston Community College of Qatar

⁴³ According to the Qatar Statistics Authority, there are over 200 primary schools in Qatar and 232 schools for secondary and preparatory. They do not list a number for universities and colleges, but according to my knowledge, there are now about 12 types of institutions serving the needs of students post-secondary. These include technical colleges, military colleges, the Education City schools, Qatar University and the new Community College opened in 2010.

⁴⁴ The Emir, Sheikha Hamad and his son, the current heir apparent Tamim, both attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Britain. Tamim was also educated at British schools throughout his youth. His younger brothers, Mohammad and Joaan, both attended Georgetown University in Qatar while his older sisters, Mayassa and Hind, attended Duke University in the US prior to Education City's creation.

⁴⁵ The Jordanian Royal family has a history of sending the ruling family to Georgetown University's Masters and Undergrad School of Foreign Affairs and so does the ruling family of Morocco.

(operated by Houston Community College from Texas) positioned to play an important role in the future.⁴⁶ Qatar University continues to be controlled by majority Qataris and in recent years has undergone strong Qatarization policies to remove many Egyptian and other non-Qatari heads of departments and colleges.⁴⁷

While working at both Qatar University and Georgetown University in SFS-Qatar, I was able to observe the ways in which language is used in these spaces. As reflected by the vignettes in chapter two, these institutions represented disparate attitudes towards the role of English and Arabic in the proposed “knowledge economy.” The overwhelmingly Arab and Muslim population of Qatar University was struggling to catch up to the education reforms of the country while the majority English speaking, non-Muslim environment of Education City created another host of issues for Qatari-Non-Qatari relations and Arabic-English ideologies. These differences can most readily be observed in the treatment and creation of Arabic language curricula and the attitudes of teachers towards the language environment in their universities and throughout Qatar and in the responses of students to these programs. From my associations with Arabic language instructors, I was able to observe the dynamics between

⁴⁶ The Community College was opening the summer after I left Qatar. I was able to attend their presentations at the school fair held at the Four Seasons Hotel. In the presentation, the emphasis was placed on providing a median education between the liberal arts colleges of Education City and the technical specializations that Qatar University promised. This would allow students who did not have the test scores to enter Education City schools to develop their language and technical skills for professional and personal purposes. There was a recognition that the community college would help the older generation of Qataris who wanted to learn English and computer skills and to become up to date with the changes occurring in the country.

⁴⁷ Qatarization is a policy developed by the government in 2000 whose goal is to increase the Qatari workforce in all sectors, public and private, to 50%. The policy is called *Quality Qatarization*, meaning they want qualified Qataris to take these jobs. This is a controversial policy among ex-pats as it often means they are not promoted or their job is given to less qualified Qatari in order to meet the percentage goals for Qataris in the workforce and in schools. This policy also affects admissions to Education City schools as Kim of Admissions stated.

individual teachers and students, between staff and administration and between nationals and non-nationals.

Hazawi of Arabic Students and Teachers at Georgetown SFS Qatar: “We are an oral culture”

“We were an oral culture *fil bidayah wa ma zal*, (in the beginning and we still are)” said Muhammad in Professor Yusuf’s Arabic class at Georgetown University. A product of the American School of Doha, Muhammad struggled to communicate in the Arabic class designed for Arab students whose level of proficiency in Standard Arabic was tested as low. The teacher, Mr. Yusuf, would often lower the difficulty level of assignments in order to get student’s to pay attention and attend. Muhammad’s comment regarding being from an oral culture was made during one of these moments when Mr. Yusuf was assigning a response to an article on the separation between religion and state. Muhammad wanted to express that using Standard Arabic was difficult for someone like himself who was from a tradition of oral speech practices. He also wanted the assignment to be reduced or made easier. Muhammad didn’t seem to be able to express himself fully in Qatari Arabic either, always falling back into English, as evidenced in his mixing of the two in the statement that “we are an oral culture.” Mr. Yusuf also often used Egyptian Arabic himself and discussed why Standard Arabic was important in some arenas (speeches, writing articles) and not in others (daily conversation). The discussion ended with the Mr. Yusuf encouraging Muhammad to share his ideas and telling the students they could turn the assignment in later in the week.⁴⁸ [Fieldnotes, October 4, 2012]

This incident took place in a classroom at Georgetown SFS-Qatar campus in Doha. Mr. Yusuf, who was used to teaching non-Arab students Arabic, was trying to come up with ways to get Qataris and Arabs like Muhammad to improve their Standard Arabic skills. These students, mostly Qatari with a handful of non-Qatari Arabs, were in the awkward position of having exposure to spoken Arabic at home, but little to poor skills in Standard Arabic because they had attended English language schools much of their lives. Mr. Yusuf would try to engage the

⁴⁸ This is the same Muhammad from the previous chapter who attended Qatar Academy and said that he received very little instruction in Arabic throughout his high school years.

students with topics such as defending Qatari and Muslim culture to westerners or playing word games and trivia, but in general the student response was lackluster. Many arrived late or left repeatedly to use the bathroom.⁴⁹ Homework assignments were turned in haphazardly and the students rarely felt comfortable using Standard Arabic in the classroom. As in the story above, Mr. Yusuf would often try to combat their fear of Standard Arabic by encouraging students to use their dialect when necessary. In another Arabic classroom at Georgetown, Ms. Asma took a different approach to teaching Arabic by pushing the students to use Standard Arabic as much as possible.

Ms. Asma is originally from Lebanon, but has lived and taught in the U.S. in the Arabic literature departments (at Tufts University and Georgetown University). She allowed me to sit in on her Beginners Arabic class and her Advanced Arabic Literature class. I observed the following in her classrooms.

Ms. Asma always used Standard Arabic in the classroom, although she was also fluent in French and English. In her beginner's class, there were similar problems to that of Mr. Yusuf's Arabic class. Students came late, reverted to English and dialect often and forgot homework assignments. Ms. Asma tried to focus on their skills and worked on improving their understanding of grammar and syntax. In the advanced class, she used high level Arabic literature and encouraged discussion in Standard Arabic. The students were more talkative and could have conversations in fusha. They were discussing novels written by prominent Egyptian, Lebanese and Moroccan writers. [Fieldnotes, October 12, 2009]

Ms. Asma placed the blame for students' poor Standard Arabic on the Qatari government, administration and parents for not prioritizing Arabic language education, saying "parents are just as proud to speak English." She also said "students had false confidence" and that "in over

⁴⁹ This was the case throughout Education City where teachers complained of student ennui and poor classroom attendance.

ten years of teaching, I have never had this situation and difference in level of knowing and not knowing” [Interview September 29, 2009]. She felt the problem was not that students were more comfortable in the oral, but that they didn’t realize when they were making mistakes or what the difference was between Standard Arabic and their dialect. One of Ms. Asma’s advanced students, Abdullah, was of Kuwaiti nationality and had the following to say about some of his peers at Georgetown:

Here I’ve noticed most people feel uncomfortable speaking Arabic, reading and writing. Many went to private schools and don’t feel comfortable speaking Arabic because they don’t know when they are making mistakes. The Arabic we speak is different from fusha. We learn Arabic for daily life. Classical Arabic we learn in the schools and by studying the Qur’an. You know this is very important - the Qur’an - understanding it is very important for the Arab. [Interview, May 12, 2010]

Remarks made by Abdullah, Ms. Asma, Muhammad and Mr. Yusuf emphasize several concerns that both students and teachers have at the university level in Qatar. In Muhammad and Mr. Yusuf’s class, emphasis is placed on oral speech practices of Arabs as being different from the Standard Arabic. This difficulty is seen as an obstacle to successful acquisition of Standard Arabic. Ms. Asma and Abdulla emphasize that some students at Georgetown have been exposed to too much English language education in private schools that they do not feel comfortable with Standard Arabic, a language linked to Arabic literacy and to the Qur’an. They also emphasize how spoken Arabic is different from the Standard Arabic of schooling, but they feel it is the responsibility of Arabs to learn how to distinguish these two variations and use them successfully. This appears to be a norm in the Arabic speech community; that individuals should be able to distinguish when to use a particular variety of Arabic. As we will see throughout this chapter, the issue for the Arabic teacher and student lies in determining how

the speech community will create new norms for communication that can incorporate Standard English, without devaluing the standard language of Arabic.

“I do speak Arabic well. I’m not able to speak fusha at all”

I met Suhaib in 2007 at the Gulf English School and was able to meet him again at Education City in the 2009-2010 school year. Suhaib was from the ruling Al-Thani family and when we met the first time, he drew me a chart of his lineage going back to Prophet Adam. He wanted to explain how close his family was to that of the founder of Qatar, Sheikh Jassim Al Thani, relative to that of the current strand which ruled Qatar (the argument being that Sheikh Hamad was actually more removed from Sheikh Jassim than his own father and therefore his family was closer to the founder). Suhaib mentioned several times that he had to hide his lineage in order to be treated like an average person in Qatar. Suhaib had changed remarkably over the three years I knew him, going from antipathy toward the changing climate of Qatar to acceptance and promotion. In 2007, he spoke with hostility about the growing number of immigrants in Qatar, especially lower class workers who were creating *fitna* (discord) in the country. He also responded to a question I posed to him and his fellow classmates about their parents’ education with the following: “my parents learned in the old ways of education. My father was trained by his father in the ways of politics and my mother learned from her mother and other women, the necessary skills.” He was the only individual to question the structure of schooling and present a different type of knowledge as important. He asked me, “What do you call it when you learn something from someone else, like in a job or something?” I suggested

the idea of apprenticeship, but we were both referring to education before it became equated with schooling.

In 2009, I observed Suhaib walking around the Georgetown building that was shared with the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) which Suhaib was enrolled in. Most often, he was chatting with one or another of his teachers in their offices. He ran for student president of the ABP, but lost. He had applied to Georgetown in 2008, but not having gained admission, he applied like many of his fellow Qataris to the ABP program to improve his English, Math and Science skills. In the spring of 2010, he informed me quite excitedly that he had gained admission to Georgetown for the 2011 school year. One afternoon in the Georgetown library, Suhaib shared with me his thoughts about language in Qatar and the historical relationship Arabic has with Islam.

Here in Qatar, Geography and History are taught in Arabic and so is Qur'an. The Sciences and Maths are in English. Easier for people when they travel. I know some people have poor Arabic, which is a shame. It is not that they prefer to keep English. Beginning in the 1990s, Qatari family realized importance of English in the world – it is worldwide spoken language. The Arabic schools begin to teach English. I do speak Arabic well. I am not able to speak fusha at all. I rarely speak it. I speak my local dialect and that is considered enough. The Qur'an is not in fusha, it is a mix of languages of Arabic from the Qur'aish who had the best language. It is more oral than literary, in our own history, not a lot of things written. It is a spoken oral culture. When you speak, your daughter may change it, like a Chinese whisper. (Field notes, October 18th, 2009)

Suhaib agrees with Muhammad's assessment that the Qatari culture is an oral one. He explains that the Arabic language is rooted in the tradition of Bedouins who moved a lot and did not leave a lot of written texts. Even the Qur'an is not considered by Suhaib to be a primarily literary text, but an oral one rooted in the speech practices of the Qur'aish, the tribe of Prophet

Muhammad. Suhaib draws upon various ideologies about language in Qatar to support his points about Standard Arabic and Standard English. *Fusha* is the language of Islam and the Quran and therefore has a special place in Qatari culture, which is highly influenced by Islam. Meanwhile, English is the “worldwide language” which is needed when people travel and in order to learn math and science. Suhaib also prioritizes knowledge that is handed down and shared through the generations and through oral communication. He emphasizes that his parents, although not schooled, have gained valuable knowledge and training from their elders through hands on experience and participation in communities of practices (Lave and Wenger 1991). Suhaib believes that Arabic is in its’ essence oral and dialectical, but also respects the need for Standard Arabic. In several of our other conversations, he emphasized the importance of Islam and the Qur’an and used phrases from fusha, the Qur’an and supplications often. To contend with the experiences of Suhaib and Muhammad who cannot speak or read fusha very well and feel their Qatari Arabic is enough for them, Arabic teachers at Education City schools decided to study how to increase literacy in fusha among their students.

Arabic for “Heritage” Learners

I met with Ahmad Banna in the summer of 2007 and would later work with him over the duration of my fieldwork. An individual with prolific experience in teaching Arabic to both native and non-native speakers, Banna moved to Qatar from Egypt to develop Georgetown University’s Arabic language program there. Having published his textbook series for non-native speakers of Arabic through Georgetown Press, Banna had a long standing relationship with the institution. As we talked in a coffee shop, Banna told me the story of an Egyptian

economist who had gone to English language schools throughout his life and lived abroad. In response to the Egyptian food crisis and the calls on the streets for bread, the young man asked “Why do Egyptians only eat bread?” Banna found this question appalling and indicative of the Egyptian economist’s position in America, far removed from Egyptian life, where bread plays an essential part in Egyptian culture. Banna does not want this cultural alienation to happen to the next generation of Arab youth who are being educated in western institutions and in Standard English. His interests were now focused on a new series of Arabic textbooks, which would improve the language skills of Arab students studying in primarily English language schools in Qatar, and throughout the region. To this effect, he had applied for and received a large grant from the newly created Qatar National Research Fund. Over the course of three years, Ahmad and his colleagues at Georgetown in Doha and in Washington, along with a colleague from Qatar University, were to develop a series of books to meet the needs of Qatari and Arab youth who were exposed to heavy instruction in Standard English and poor instruction in Standard Arabic.

In the proposal to the Qatar National Research Fund, Banna and his colleagues used the term “heritage learners” to describe the position of Qataris in Qatar’s knowledge economy. This term was first used by Kagan and Polinsky (2002) to describe students in the United States who are able to speak and understand their “heritage” (Spanish) language moderately well, but acquire greater proficiency in another language (English) because it is the dominant language of the society. The argument is that heritage speakers require a different type of instruction in their “heritage” languages than the non-native speaker. Ahmad and his colleagues adapted this model to the Qatari context and proposed that Arabs in Qatar who go to primarily English

medium schools require a different curriculum of instruction in Arabic than that of the non-native speaker and that of the native speaker who lives in an Arabic supporting environment. The “heritage learner’s” exposure to their “heritage” language is betwixt and between the two categories of speakers that education historically caters to: the native speaker and the foreign language or non-native speaker.

In the course of several meetings of these Arabic teachers, there emerged a disagreement over the use of the term “heritage” to label the Arab students in the classes given at the Education City universities. The opposition was from Zahra, a colleague of Banna’s, who has published numerous books on the topic of Arabic linguistics. Zahra argued that the students at Education City were not “heritage” speakers because their context was an Arabic one, whereas Arabs in the United States could be called “heritage” because their context was majority English.

The other issue that this group consistently came up against was that of *diglossia*, a seminal term in Arabic linguistics coined by Fergusson in 1959, which describes an ideological hierarchy dictating spoken Arabic to certain contexts while relegating Standard Arabic to primarily formal, written and religious contexts. In one meeting, the following conversation occurred about which term to use to describe the students that ended up in their classrooms at Education City. The conversation begins with a question of what theory should frame their problematic. The original term of “heritage” used in the proposal was not sitting right with most of the instructors. They explored the idea of literacy and bilingualism, with Ahmad moving closer to a question of quality standards for bilingual education.

Ahmad: Let's strengthen the theoretical foundation. Is it heritage, literacy, bilingualism, diglossia?

Zahra: Not bilingualism

Hana: It is acquisition of a different variety -- English and Arabic bilingualism. If Arabic is weak, then we should study everything in Arabic.

Zahra: How about immersion in both. Science and Math in English and Arabic. Same content, different languages.

Yusuf: Difficult for secondary level.

Hanaa: If we start with Arabic, it's not hard.

Zahra: It is time consuming if you want bilingualism.

Ahmad: Here and in the Emirates, the schools want to exit bilingual students.

Ahmad: I have doubts on heritage learners - is that appropriate? Or, is it a matter of literacy?

Ahmad: We should revisit the term heritage.

Hanaa: At a conference on heritage, they considered it a problem of literacy

Zahra: It is because of language schools and international schools

The difference is the language schools. They take a different subject in Arabic and the language is weak a little. Students from international schools, they are heritage. They only know *alif ba* - the definition of heritage.

As the conversation progresses, Zahra does not think it is bilingualism, but Ahmad wants to consider Qatar as a bilingual context. Hanaa suggests that at a United States conference she attended, the issue of heritage was considered in the context of literacy skills while Zahra contends that the problem is language schools versus international schools. She considers students who emerge from the "international" and language school as "heritage" speakers because they are only exposed to the Arabic alphabet in these schools. As the conversation continues, Hanaa defines heritage and Ahmad returns to the idea of bilingualism.

Hanaa: There are three levels of heritage -- those that read Arabic, those whose parents are Arab, and those who speak Arabic, but they are illiterate.

Ahmad: Relevance - Al kifa'... - what does it mean in language competence? Among heritage there are those who understand 100%. I feel if we teach some subjects in some languages like in AUC- students from international school - their language was okay. I want to see standards for bilingualism.

Zahra: Independent Schools - It is a matter of literacy and depends on knowledge of the student

Hanaa: Perhaps it is because acquisition of the language stopped, the second language was dominant. Polansky calls it interrupted literacy-dominant language English

Zahra- **The level of English teachers is not very good, speak broken English. The feelings of the parents is that English is more important. This affects Arabic and English - and causes problems for Arabic. In Egypt - my niece speaks like an American- because the study is strictly in English.**

Ahmad: We need theoretical clarification.

Hanaa: We don't need to use heritage.

Hanaa offers Polansky's notion of "interrupted literacy" to describe their students' language practices, but Zahra and Ahmad are not convinced. Zahra emphasizes the role of parents in making students more interested in learning English rather than Arabic. At this point in the conversation, they are still unable to come to a conclusion regarding the theoretical framework for talking about Arabic. As they continue, Zahra offers a solution rooted in the culture of orality. She suggests that students are "*abna al luga*" or "children of the Qatari language."

Zahra: **Children of the language (abna al luga). They are the children of Qatari language. Is there a distinction for heritage- for the level of listening, the ability of listening is always better.**

Ahmad: In *Fusha* they have strong listening. Better listening comprehension.

Zahra: They are still children of the language (*abna al luga*)

Ahmad: There are some that are very religious- this is a conservative society, they listen to Arabic language a lot. Around 80%.

Zahra: Literacy events more in Arabic. They are not illiterate- this is difficult. **Literacy has a different meaning - they work with the language.**

Ahmad: We need a synonym - illiterate has a negative connotation, the word illiterate is shocking

Zahra: At Northwestern, there are different types of students. Carnegie Mellon University are *ibn al luga* - the students at Georgetown are weak. Qatar Academy very bad. The type of instruction is poor.

Zahra: I see even in heritage - at home they watch TV in Arabic, speak with others in Arabic, shib mutasawi -

Ahmad: It is the subject and style of teaching, for both.

Yusuf: They have the ability to listen - if we knew the depth of the language - the absence of culture.

Ahmad: Is it culture or the people. The issue of culture. The students at AUC [American University in Cairo] - weakness in culture, but still better than here.

Yusuf: After six months here, I see the historical experience is very different from Egypt and the Levant.

Zahra: Their thoughts differ completely, the new generation - have no culture. Northwestern in the middle - when I talk to them, they are Arab - linguistically they are confused. *kullu khabar*. From children of language - what can we ask them?

Ahmad: **We can't call them *ibn al luga*. They are very limited in fusha.**

Zahra is against the term heritage and prefers *abna al luga*, children of the language, and specifically, children of the Qatari language. She brings up the point that while the students have very strong Arabic language comprehension and listening skills, their written and spoken skills in Standard Arabic are limited. Her colleagues agree on this point. The idea of literacy being the framework is refused because it would require defining the students language usage as "incomplete literacy" or basically illiterate. Ahmad uses the Egyptian vernacular term *sadma*, or shocking, to refute the use of "illiterate" to define the students. Then they finally discuss whether it is an issue of culture and environment, that the students are not sufficiently immersed in an Arabic language culture. This issue comes up throughout the discussion through Zahra's points about the different types of schools students attend. She argues that if they are in "international" schools, then the student is more likely to have poor literacy in Standard Arabic. Although they all agree on this point, there is no simple pedagogical solution to this society level problem. In later meetings, the emphasis on culture becomes more important and they discuss the seminal texts, writings and authors who Arab students should be familiar with and engaged by. They want to make Arabic interesting and competitive with

English and want their Arab students, Qataris and non-Qataris, to recognize the beauty and pleasure that can be found through fusha.

The issue of “heritage” speakers is addressed by Garcia (2005) who argues that the term came about in a time in American history when bilingualism became restricted. She says, “by leaving languages in the past, the term heritage languages connotes something that one holds onto vaguely as one’s remembrances, but certainly not something that is used in the present or can be projected into the future” (2005:601). While students are exposed to Arabic, it depends on the types of schools they attend whether there is *enough* exposure to Arabic for it to be considered their native language or a “heritage” language. As Garcia notes, there is a tension between history, the present and the future, which is implicated in the use of the word “heritage.” This conversation and “talk about talk” among teachers and researchers of Arabic demonstrates how Arabic functions outside the definitions that were available in western academia to describe Arabic language practices in Qatar’s speech community. As members of a language community, these teachers are invested in outlining and defining the parameters of Standard Arabic. They are finding their jobs challenging in the light of the increasing emphasis placed on Standard English in schools in Qatar. In order to understand these debates further, I interviewed Dr. Zahra, who was very outspoken about her views on the subject.

Old versus New Ideas about Arabic

I went to Dr. Zahra’s office in order to get her perspective on the dynamics between Standard Arabic and the dialects in her eyes. As a linguist and teacher of Arabic for several decades, she also held the position of director of the American Language Institute in Cairo. In

her opinion, the socioeconomic context in Qatar, in the shops and in most public arenas, did not support Arabic language acquisition and practice, but the home and family served as strong bulwarks for the language. Despite all the academic focus on dialects versus the Standard Arabic, Zahra felt that they are just variations of one another and that the dialects stem from Standard Arabic. One of my Arabic teachers had described this view of Arabic and its relationship to the dialects as the “older” theory or idea about Arabic, implying that there were newer ideas about Arabic and its dialects that were being espoused today. When I asked Dr. Zahra what she thought of the idea that the dialects and Standard Arabic were disparate enough to be considered two different languages (a new idea) she responded, “People who think fusha and the colloquial are two different languages, don’t know anything about Arabic.”

The distinction between the older theories which perceived of the dialects of Arabic as directly linked to Standard Arabic and newer western theories of Arabic which advocated considering them as different languages became apparent in an interaction between Dr. Zahra and a gentleman who came to her presentation on her most recent work in Egypt.

Zahra was presenting her findings at a lecture series organized by Education City professors to share work in which various members of the community were involved. Zahra had conducted a survey of Egyptians from various backgrounds who were asked to distinguish between words which were from the Standard Arabic and those which were deemed *ammiya* or dialect. In her presentation, she emphasized that even those who were Arabic language teachers mistook many Standard Arabic words as only occurring in the dialect. Zahra was attempting to demonstrate that speakers of Egyptian Arabic do not realize that their dialect is in actuality drawn primarily from the standard vocabulary of Arabic. She concluded with recommendations for teachers, in the early years of schooling, to emphasize and teach the relationship that Standard Arabic has to the spoken language by using Standard Arabic words that are found in the dialect. In this way, children might acquire Standard Arabic more readily and fluidly and relinquish the mental barrier between Egyptian Arabic and fusha.

In response to her presentation, a gentleman from the Supreme Education Council in Qatar relayed the findings from a study conducted by the Council on 5,000 children in Qatar which found that differences between the dialect spoken at home and the Standard Arabic taught in school could be the source of student's poor performance in Arabic language tests. Zahra did not find this to be a convincing argument, responding that she felt the quality of Arabic instruction is poor and the presentation of materials in Arabic is done in such a way that children are not interested in learning the language, especially when English and other languages are taught with more appealing visual and technological aids. [Fieldnotes, November 12, 2012]

The gentleman from the SEC was facing dilemmas similar to that of researchers in Dr. Zahra's group. How could they reconcile western theories of language acquisition with an Arabic speech community which prized various dialects for speaking and Standard Arabic in education? When tested, students' literacy skills are often emphasized, but in the case of Standard Arabic, students often have better listening comprehension than written comprehension of the language because that is how they are often taught and encounter Standard Arabic, a language of Qur'an recitation, religious sermons, media news and similar events that span the oral/literary continuum. The teachers and researchers in Zahra's group explicitly note that their students have different levels of literacy in oral and written Standard Arabic. Both Ahmad's research group and the gentleman from the SEC are faced with this new emphasis on literacy practices brought about by the "knowledge economy" model in which literacy testing is essential to confirming a student's position within the new hierarchy of private and public schools. As an additional obstacle, Arabic is placed in competition with English and must demonstrate its ability to be a "modern" language before it can be used to teach math, science, technology and be the language of instruction in higher education.

The perception or ideology of English as a uniform, international language, fractured only slightly by the "Englishes" used by Indians and Filipinos, places pressure on Arabic to be

mirror of its English counterpart in how it is taught and used. While English speakers do experience variations between dialects, the teaching of a Standard English is so effectively accomplished through schools in Anglophone and post-colonial societies, that English is perceived to be a model for other languages (Parakama 1995). As English serves as the vehicle of “international” and “private” education in Qatar, the perception of its superiority carries on into the teaching of the less “developed” Arabic language.

Who put the “modern” in Modern Standard Arabic?

In order to understand the complexity of these ideologies of language across the English-Arabic divide, it is helpful to relay developments in the perception and teaching of Arabic in institutions of higher education in the West and in the region. While Arabic studies designed for non-natives in American and European institutions frame Arabic as “Modern” Standard Arabic (MSA), distinguishing it from its classical counterpoint, institutions in the region have no equivalent terminology for studying a “Modern” Arabic. Only in the Arabic for Non-native speakers program at Qatar University is the term MSA used, but only once on their program and class descriptions. And while the issue of teaching spoken Arabic has been hotly contested in the academies of the United States and Europe, dialectical studies in the region are limited and have only recently become of increased interests to regional linguists.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Attendance at the Middle East Studies Association annual conference in 2011 confirms the rising interest on the part of scholars of Arabic, especially Arabs themselves, on the subject of the difference between dialects and Standard Arabic. Many teachers presented ideas of how to teach dialects and Standard Arabic side by side in the American universities. There was recognition on the part of these Arabic instructors that this approach was more viable in the western context than in Arab societies, where the distinction between Standard Arabic and the dialects is a taboo subject or one which is glossed over. There was also a strong support among teachers for continuing to use and teach Standard Arabic as a language which allows access to all of the Arab world and its literary production.

Arabic is taught under the name of “Modern Standard Arabic” (MSA) in most American Universities, although a more literal translation of the Arabic equivalent would be “The Eloquent Arabic Language.”⁵¹ MSA is supposed to be a break from the Classical Arabic of the Qur’an and the early Islamic empire, divesting itself of some of the stylistic aspects of the language such as inflection, case endings and more complex verb conjugation (Blau 1981; Chejne 1999). Blau (1981) argues that MSA emerged in the 19th century after a period of stagnation in which written Arabic was relegated to specialized fields such as that of the *ulema* (religious scholars), jurists and employees of the vast Ottoman Empire which used Turkish and Arabic as their primary language (also see Suleiman 1994). He also argues that during the Golden Era of Islamic civilization, there emerged a Middle Arabic which differed from Qur’anic Arabic and the highly erudite classical language used in the period directly following the death of Muhammad to “preserve” the language of the Qur’an (1981). This theory has not been widely accepted and most histories of Arabic only mention a transition from classical Arabic of the Qur’an and early Arabic poetry to the emergence of Modern Standard Arabic in the 19th century (Bassiouny 2010: Chejne 1999). The variations between Classical, Middle and Modern Standard Arabic do not lie in their grammar or syntax, but in word choice and the decline in the usage of certain phrases or terminology. Perhaps this is why many have hesitated to accept Middle Arabic as a distinctive linguistic phenomenon. The contrast between Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic is much more evident as MSA has absorbed numerous non-Arabic words and since the 19th century, Arabic teachers have attempted to simplify the complicated

⁵¹ اللغة العربية الفصحى The word fusha is used in the Qur’an to describe Arabic several times and to give justification for its choice as the language of revelation. *Fusha* means not only eloquence, but also clarity in speech.

grammatical rules of Arabic into more sizeable content. What used to take over 20 years to learn through personal instruction at the hands of specialized teachers has been consolidated into smaller lessons so that children could be instructed in Arabic literacy in the span of 6-12 years (Blau 1981).

In textbooks at Qatar University and in course listings, Arabic is usually listed as *al-lughat al-arabiya*, without reference to the word modern. There is recognition of the historical shift of the Arabic language as represented by classes which teach *jahiliyya* poetry (the name given to the period prior to Islam) and in references to “modern” literature of the Maghrib, Egypt and the Gulf region. Nonetheless, Arabic in schools is simply Arabic. The relationship between the development of “modern” language and the interest of the western world in the region and its’ language(s) is not coincidental (Hoffman 2000; Segalla 2009; Suleiman 2003).

The standardization of Arabic was undertaken in accordance with the burgeoning nationalism in the region beginning under Ottoman Turkish rule and coming to fruition under colonialism. Suleiman (2003) argues that the Ottoman Empire’s use of Turkish fueled Arab sentiments and led to several movements to unify and strengthen the language community. Colonial powers exploited religious, political and linguistic differences in the populations of the Middle East under their rule, contributing greatly to the unification of these groups under an Arabic and Islamic banner (Hoffman 2000; Segalla 2009; Holt 1994; Starrett1998). The introduction of western styled education, first under Ottoman rule and continuing under colonial rule produced the conditions and contexts through which Arabic language standardization would occur (Fortna 2002). This process was complicated by the formation of new post-colonial states that were reconnecting with one another on the basis of language

after a long period of invasion. The intellectual and educational response to these events would give Arabic the responsibility of unifying the community.

This responsibility can be seen in the formation of Qatar University in 1971, designed to be a premier institution of Arab higher education throughout the region. The recent shifts and trends in education reform have turned Qatar University's language of instruction and administration primarily to English. Their website has no Arabic equivalent and their university wide publications are either both in Arabic and English or just in English. This is related to the increase in the number of non-Arabs who are working to make the university's education comparative to that of the Education City schools. As we turn to Qatar University's Arabic for Non-Native Speakers Program, it becomes evident that interacting with and dealing with the mirror of Arabic through the eyes of non-Arabs and non-Arabic speakers produces a different set of questions regarding Arabic and its internal variation.

Hazawi 2, How the "Non-native" influences the "Native"

At Qatar University, Arabic language courses designed for those interested in learning Arabic are called *al lugat al arabiya li gair al natiqueen biha* اللغة العربية لغير الناطقين بها or literally translated as: "Arabic for those who are not native in it." Sometimes it is referred to in an auxiliary way as: "Arabic for those who are native in other languages." In the following situations, the native speaker and the non-native speaker mirror one another, like that of the anthropologist and his or her interlocutor. When the non-native becomes involved in language practices of the native, he or she provides the native a different way of looking at their own language practices.

Individuals at the Arabic for Non-Native Speakers (ANNS) Program at Qatar University arrive with varying expectations of the language. Teachers in the program divide the students into several categories, based on reasons for wanting to learn Arabic to the country of origin and obviously, level of instruction. Consistently, 50% of the students in this program, when asked why they want to learn Arabic, say it is for religious reasons, while the remaining 50 percent offer political, cultural and economic rationales.⁵² But all of the students face a dilemma of learning how to speak Arabic with the local population. For many, it is the first time in an Arab country, and for others it is one in a list of several. Those who have had longer exposure are aware of the divergence in Standard Arabic and spoken Arabic and that each country and region has various dialects of Arabic, which makes it challenging for the individual to gain credibility and confidence in their speaking. This incongruence was highlighted in the end of the year ceremony for the ANNS program in June of 2010 in a video presented by two members of the first level Arabic class. In it, you see a young Caucasian man with sandy colored hair entering a *shawarma* (a meat sandwich) shop and carrying out a conversation with the vendors behind the counter. He appears to be a regular at the shop and the attendants are all smiles at the young man's attempts to speak Arabic. He begins with the Standard Arabic greeting of *kayfa halakum?* or "How are you" and proceeds to speak broken Standard Arabic, asking for one *shawarma*. The attendant tells the young man in Jordanian dialect that he speaks Arabic well, to which the young man says awkwardly in fusha, "maybe one day I will speak better Arabic than you." There are several times where the audience breaks out in

⁵² This information was gleaned from a pamphlet regarding the program and from conversations with the program's director and teachers. I had extensive exposure to students and teachers in this program as my husband was a participant in 2005 and when I began field work, I was able to become good friends with many of the professors in the program and several of the students.

laughter at the young man's attempts to communicate with the vendor, but there is something disquieting about the interaction. The primary being that the young man, after completing a year of the program, seems incapable of carrying out this simple interaction without making grammatical errors. But aside from this pedagogical concern, there is an underlying issue of the young man's inability to communicate in the spoken dialects of Arabic, or some might say "street language," in which most buying and selling occurs in the Arabic speaking parts of the city.

In a conversation with Carmen, a program mate of the young men who created the video, she shared her disappointment with the video, which did not show case their Arabic skills or demonstrate successful interactions in Arabic. In addition, she felt that the young man in the video was disrespectful to the vendors in saying that he might speak "better Arabic" than them, emphasizing the status of Standard Arabic over the dialects. This interaction highlights the difficulty of acquiring "native" like proficiency in a language in which formal instruction does not help to communicate effectively within the speech community. This small scene can be extrapolated to understand the position of scholars who regard the status of Standard Arabic to be detrimental to spoken Arabic, like that of Haeri and several others (Haeri 2003; Ibrahim 1983).⁵³ Faced with this plurilingualism in the speech community, the non-native speaker must learn another form of speech that is not normally taught in the classroom, which they have to acquire (as Arabs do) from individuals in the speech community and through interaction. This

⁵³ There are several individuals who have studied the benefits and drawbacks of the standard-colloquial divide in Arab societies. Among them, Khamis-Dakwar (2005), Maamouri (1998), Saigh-Haddad (2003), Ibrahim (2009) have each identified the heteroglossic nature of Arabic as problematic for language acquisition, especially that of literacy.

arouses feelings of shame on both sides, with the native speaker made to feel deficient in the formal language and the non-native speaker incompetent in the spoken language. It is obvious why individuals, on both sides, desire greater intra-lingual homogeneity.

“I had never seen Qatari Arabic written before”

In order to help individuals like the young man mentioned above, the program coordinators had decided that year to create a course for their students in the Qatari dialect.⁵⁴ Noorah, my tutor for one summer, was slated to teach the class and create the curriculum. During the summer in which she so generously tutored me in Arabic, we had several conversations about Qatari education, the growing use of English in Qatar, literature in Arabic and the issue of language divergence in Arabic. One of these conversations is particularly relevant to her new position as the curriculum coordinator of a class on Qatari dialect. In 2008, Noorah shared with me a story that reflected her relationship with the written version of the spoken Qatari dialect:

I was a teacher in the high schools before I came to Qatar University and began teaching in the ANNS program. The reforms to the schools had started to take place and I decided to explore the changes. My friends and I attended one of the seminars hosted by the Supreme Education Council on how to teach Arabic. The presenter was one of my former students. She had handed out copies of a sheet of paper to each of us. When I looked at it, I saw that it was a passage written in Qatari spoken Arabic. I was so shocked that I immediately turned the paper over. The presenter was worried so she

⁵⁴ I was very familiar with this program as my husband had received a scholarship to study there for a year in 2005-6 and I myself had received tutoring from one of the teachers the summer of 2008. We became very good friends with several of the instructors and either visited them in their homes or had them to dinner at our house. Their impressions of the strength of Arabic language instruction at the university and elementary level was interesting as they focused their careers on teaching non-native speakers the language. On the issue of diglossia in particular, they represented both a unified front on several key aspects and divergence on other relative aspects.

came over to make sure everything was okay. I had never seen Arabic written that way and it seemed wrong to me (Trans. from Arabic by Author).⁵⁵

What was before Noorah was a passage that would normally be written in Standard Arabic, but was instead written out with Arabic letters in the Qatari dialect. An analogy to English would be the writing of a letter in African American Vernacular English, Cockney or Scottish English, which means adding or deleting letters to accurately reflect the sound in the spoken form and the altering of grammar and syntax to fit the spoken language, rather than the “correct” language usually taught in schools and required in formal settings.⁵⁶ But what had caused Noorah to become the instructor of a class in Qatari dialect when only two years ago she was astonished by the use of Qatari dialect in educational settings? When I asked her about this shift, Noorah explained that the students really wanted to be able to communicate when they went out and interacted with Arabic speakers and the program felt it was necessary to offer such a class. She described her role as a passive one in which she was trying to make both the department and the students happy. Noorah was considered one of the favorite instructors because she covered a range of topics and always brought in relevant material to instruct the students. She focused on topics familiar to the Qatari context and being Qatari herself, she was able to challenge stereotypes of Qatari women as docile, subjugated and ignorant. She was also eager to discuss issues of inequality and to point out when something was cultural as opposed to a requisite of Islam, such as women not being allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia when they could drive freely in Qatar and many other Muslim countries. Noorah loved to read biographies and the poetry of *Muttanabi*, a much revered lyricist whose poems are memorized

⁵⁵ Field Notes, July 2008. Translated from conversation held in Arabic

⁵⁶ Bassiouney(2010) and Ibrahim (1998) go thorough review of such differences in Arabic, including variations in speech for women and men.

by school children across the Arab world. Her love of Arabic literature could explain her initial objection to the use of Qatari Arabic in reading and writing, but when she realized that students really wanted to be able to communicate verbally with other Arabs, she acquiesced to design a curriculum to teach them.

Noorah's predicament highlights several elements of the issue of Arabic language instruction and its' various dialects within the context of Qatar. In this situation, emphasis on spoken Arabic stems from the non-native speakers desire to understand and learn Arabic as a unified whole. There is an assumption that when learning to read and write Arabic, that the non-native speakers will then be able to communicate orally with Arabs. When they interact with Arabs in day-to-day life, they discover that their Standard Arabic sounds odd and different from the language of every day communication, which are the regional dialects. And although most Arabs can understand the formal Arabic used in teaching literacy skills, most prefer to speak in their native dialects, whether that is Egyptian, Jordanian, Moroccan, Sudanese or Qatari. Noorah told me her opinion in this regard was the "old one," similar to the opinions of Zahra Ibrahim mentioned earlier and also referencing the current disagreements about the nature of the relationship between the dialects and the standard. This "old" opinion is that the fusha is the mother of all of the Arabic dialects and that most words in the spoken language could be traced back to an original word or construct in Standard Arabic. This is how Noorah organized the curriculum for the Qatari Dialect course, in which she has a column showing the fusha or Standard Arabic way to say something and its variation in Qatari dialect. Dr. Adam, her colleague in the program and a professor of Arabic literature on sabbatical from Cairo University who was also on the research team from Georgetown SFS-Q, defined dialect in

similar terms saying that spoken Arabic is the reworking of a term in the Standard Arabic to mean something different or new in the spoken. An English equivalent would be that of “cool” or “bloody,” which when used in diverse contexts, mean very different things.

As we have read, the variation between spoken and written Standard Arabic is a source of debate and discussion in both academic circles and in the Arabic pedagogical community. Within these circles, the emphasis is on different aspects of language, and I argue that the primary differentiation is that of the focus on speech communities versus language communities. In the first section, we looked at varying definitions of the Arabic speaking community in Doha and individual and group attempts to tailor the teaching of Arabic to the diverse needs that Qataris learning in English language institutions face. Arabic as a primarily oral language, learned through oral and aural practices, emerges as a theme for students and teachers. While students at Education city, who attended private English schools, struggle to reconcile their poor Arabic language skills with their own perceptions of language use as rooted in oral communication, non-native speakers at Qatar University try to reconcile their Standard Arabic skills with the spoken Arabic necessary for daily communication. The focus on speech practices and their alignment with schooling Arabic is the locus of concern for Arabic instructors and students of Arabic in both contexts. Language variation is normal to the Arabic speech community, but has been corralled in the historical process of clearly defining the border of the language community. Arabic language teachers and students are finding it challenging to incorporate both Standard English and Standard Arabic in the language community because it requires individuals be attuned to “correct” grammar and syntax of language, but within the

speech community there is greater flexibility and a norm is emerging for individuals to use Arabic and English in communication.

Speech Communities, Contemporaneity and Arabisi

In a newsletter called *Hazawi* which was published by Virginia Commonwealth University's Arts school in Doha, there is a lengthy piece on the back page entitled, "The New Arabisi." I discovered the newsletter when I visited the school's arts exhibition during the summer of 2007. Students' work was presented throughout the school and this newsletter was outside the main exhibition hall which showcased the best works of students. The newsletter's theme is stories of the future of the region, covering topics such as the *abaya*, technology, traffic, and cultural festivals. The entire newsletter is in Arabic and English, each piece translated from either Arabic to English or English to Arabic (it is not obvious unless you compare the two versions, which is the original). In this particular piece, it appeared (from grammatical errors in English) that the young woman wrote in Arabic and translated to English with both pieces being well written. In it, Noof Al Thani predicts that the new language of Arabisi will replace all other languages in Doha as the medium of communication among Arabs. Beginning the piece with an overview of the history of the region, Noof argues that, "language is a live process that follows even the slightest change of any nation." She explains that although the Ottomans and British empires have left the region, traces of their influence still remain. The current dilemma stems, for the author, from the challenges of becoming economically and politically successful in today's "era of globalization." Thus, almost all schools teach English and Arabic is taught as a second language. This results in children who are unable

to read and write Arabic, but are fluent in English. The author also argues that English has become essential to everyone today, because there are many words that come from that language which are “impossible to translate” such as google, blog, online and log in, among others. “Therefore, the Arabic language is getting poorer on a daily basis.” She concludes with the following:

After a while, the time will come when we can expect the new language called Arabisi to become the prevalent spoken language in the Gulf region. It is still too soon to have it officially become the prevalent spoken language because its’ written form won’t be developed to such an extent, but the authors will start using it in their novels, for sure. At this stage, this new creation will be considered the jargon of the Arabian Peninsula. Many people will speak Arabisi instead of learning both Arabic and English simply because dealing with one foreign language rather than two in the region will be more practical and easier. **The presence of Arabic will still exist, but it will be possibly offered in schools, as a classical option and won’t be taught as a modern language any more. The English language will be spoken by the western nationals who will never recognize Arabisi as a new language.** [Al Thani 2009: 14]

This prediction is an interesting one, especially as it is made by a young Qatari woman who does not fear the linguistic changes occurring in her country because she feels comfortable in her use of both Arabic and English and in her constant mixing of the two into a new language called Arabisi. Arabisi or Arabizi has become a popular term for the intermixing of the two languages in every day speech and conversation and the use of numerous words from English in Arabic conversational speech. The writer also feels that it is impossible to properly translate English words such as internet, website, mobile, cell phone, thus resulting in the decline of Arabic and the increasing use of Arabisi instead. She points out three prescient factors, from her vantage point, in the increasing use of Arabisi: transmigration, technology/media, and schooling. As the population in Doha becomes increasingly diverse, there has been a rise in

medial languages, whether between Arabic and English, Arabic and Urdu/Hindi or Arabic and Arabic. As individuals encounter people from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, especially those who work in the homes as maids, drivers, cleaners, nannies and tutors, the Qatari nationals are increasingly exposed to various languages and vocabularies, and ways of expression.

Noof's vision is focused on the speech community in Doha. While she is projecting into the future, she is actually describing the present only slightly rearranged. The future world, where Standard English and Standard Arabic are on the curriculum and textbooks, while the tongue of the Arab adapts and incorporates English words into spoken Qatari Arabic, is already taking place in Doha. The only difference is the projection that the majority of "educated" Arabs will develop Arabisi to the point where English and Arabic will not be spoken separately and that this language develops a written form accepted for usage in literary writing. As a student of an Education City school in Doha, where English is the primary language of instruction and Arabic is spoken with heavy use of English vocabulary, Noof's forecast is easy to imagine. In contrast to the Arabs, Noof believes that the western expatriates will never learn Arabisi and will continue to only use English. Noof approaches the speech community and its transitional status, where languages are being used interchangeably in a straightforward way, devoid of fear or anxiety about a loss of cultural identity.

The development of Arabizi in the speech community, although inevitable for individuals like Noof, is a cause for anxiety for other Arabs. Several articles regarding the combined usage of Arabic and English have appeared on a blog by Fatima Said, a PhD student at

Birbeck University in London interested in issues of Arabic language diversity

(<http://arabizi.wordpress.com/>). In particular, an article about Saudi Arabia and the increasing use of Arabizi has the following statement by a student:

I was so addicted to this language [Arabizi] when chatting and sending texts to my friends. When it came to my research paper, I was finding it hard to write in Arabic. I had to write it in Arabizi first and then translated it into Arabic. When I start writing in Arabic, I found myself committing many mistakes and typos and sometimes had difficulty finding the words I wanted to express my thoughts (Ghanem 2011: 2).

The article continues onto present the perspective of those who consider this to be a disturbing trend and those who feel it is in no way detrimental to mix Arabic and English. It concludes with an Arabic language teacher at a private school in Jeddah who argues that if people don't use Arabic, it will die out. Language death is a reoccurring topic on Fatima Said's blog, in which she goes between being concerned about linguistic transformations in Arabic and recognizing language creativity as a natural part of human communication. While the blog is called Arabizi, Fatima Said posts often about policies, articles and op-eds in which the complications of Arabic's standard-dialect continuum and the emergence of English, lead to concerns about Arabic's demise in both spoken and written forms.

The major concerns about Standard Arabic arise in the context of literacy, writing and the development and use of Standard Arabic as opposed to other languages. The underlying issue is that Arabs have for centuries existed with a high level of plurilingualism within their speech communities, between Standard Arabic and local dialects. That literacy was primarily introduced through Qur'an schools has been noted in numerous historical sources. The rise of foreign language schools during colonialism and the onslaught of globalization have now made English more important than Arabic. This transition is the one that is most confusing to the

native language speaker of Arabic dialects because exposure to Standard English, in an Alice in Wonderland type fall, has caused the Arab to look more closely at their own language use. How much language variation can a language withstand is the question that is challenging the Arabic speech community. While Arabizi maybe one solution to this dilemma, which offers a medium of language for highly educated Arabs coming out of English schools and living in Arab states, the belief that Standard Arabic is essential to Arab and Muslim identity continues to be an influential ideology.

Conclusion

In the contemporary condition of globalizing processes, however, anthropological linguists find themselves in a current of rather fast-moving dynamic cultural processes. When these processes are viewed through the lens of the grammar-centered projects of the discipline, they give impressions of "language death," of less severe "language loss" in one or another respect of structural and lexical and pragmatic richness, and of "language interference" or mixing. [Silverstein 1998: 409]

Silverstein cautions anthropological linguists from placing a grammar based model of language upon practices which are "dynamic" by labeling languages as going through death or loss because they stray from grammatical correctness. This comment is made in the context of a history of colonial linguistics and defining languages using the standards of western academic research. In the context of Doha, where things are moving at a fast pace, teachers and students are trying to understand how language should be used and should function in the society. It is appealing, as Silverstein has suggested, to view language mixing and straying from grammatical correctness as a sign of "language death." Instead, Silverstein argues, and I concur, that language should be understood through the speech community in order to

contextualize variability in language practice. Trends such as Arabizi and “heritage” speakers are indicative of changes to the speech community that are then reflected in discussions about what language should dominate the language community. In approaching Arabic through the speech community model, where orality also takes primacy, Arabic can be studied not from a grammar centric perspective, but a speech centric one.

Silverstein’s notion of the speech community is particularly helpful for studying the context of Arabic speech and language practices. It allows one to analyze the variety of language ideologies that are generated by changes to the speech community and to recognize that these ideologies are attached to both oral and literary modes of language. Teachers and students in Qatar emphasize that fusha is learned through oral and aural sources, with Arabic literacy being primarily connected to Qur’an, newspapers and other sources. They also recognize that new standards and requirements for English literacy in the “knowledge economy” challenge the range and variability within Arabic. It is not enough for Qataris and Arabs to listen to Qur’anic Arabic, read a newspaper with general comprehension or carry out a conversation in a mixture of dialect and Standard Arabic. Now that students are required to take SATs and TOEFL in English and some standardized tests in Arabic, teachers and students are reassessing their relationship to Arabic language practices, oral, literary and aural.

In exploring the relationship of multiple languages in the speech community, we can see why diglossia is not the most appropriate model for Arabic language use because the incorporation of English within the speech community through forms such as Arabisi illustrates the flexibility of Arabic speakers in incorporating other languages. If we were to use the

diglossia model, we would have to conclude that the inclusion of English would indicate a type of triglossia. But in effect, what is happening is that individuals are incorporating languages in the speech community according to norms of usage agreed upon by language speakers. This type of consensus occurs in practical, everyday language use. But the process of inclusion of Standard English in the language community is fraught with questions of language, identity and nationalism. It is not as easy for teachers and students to accept that Standard English maybe overriding Standard Arabic as the best language for participation in a Qatari language community. While one might counter that language community and speech community are simply variations of the diglossia theory, I would argue that diglossia sets up a binary of usage internally within the Arabic language that doesn't exist as strictly for the native speaker who views their own language use in light of the norms extant in the speech community. Diglossia implies that there should be a norm in which Arabs use one unified language for all situations, usually the spoken dialects of Arabic. In complicating the scene by incorporating Standard English and spoken varieties, we are able to see why the diglossic model is too simplistic in accounting for how and why individuals are interacting with languages in the way they are.

There are no simple binaries and even the categories of speech and language communities overlap and run into one another. There is an important recognition on the part of the teachers in this chapter that students have different needs and relationships with language. Thus, the Arabic teachers at Georgetown recognize that Arabic students at Georgetown have limited exposure to Standard Arabic, but that does not absolve them of the responsibility to learn Standard Arabic as this language indexes Arab culture and identity and participation within a language community very distinct from Standard English. On the other

hand, they realize that Arabic presents students with a more complex system of norms related to language in the speech community. This is highlighted most clearly in the case of non-native speakers of Arabic who have difficulty communicating in regional dialects of Arabic because they are taught Standard Arabic.

I would like to return to the idea that the ethnographer creates an infra-language between themselves and their interlocutors. This means taking the meta-pragmatic accounts of language speakers as reflecting a relationship that individual has with the language and how they feel it needs to be used in the community. If we take this to be the case, then my interlocutors indicate that it is normative within the Arabic speech community to be familiar and competent enough in written and spoken forms of Standard Arabic, but use a regional variety of Arabic in most speech contexts. This is slightly different from diglossia because it indicates a range of relationships with language that cross-cut both oral-literate divides and varieties of Arabic. It is still a norm in the Arab community to be expected to use Standard Arabic when called upon. While there are spaces more or less associated with Standard forms of Arabic, the expectation is that an educated Arab should be able to use the Standard form in any given context.

What has happened at the university level is that several benchmarks have been created to indicate one's ability to participate in literary and oral practices in both Standard English and Standard Arabic. In addition, because the norm in English is to speak some variation of the Standard English taught in schools, there is an easier transition between speech and language communities. This English language norm has now become the standard with which Arabic must compete. The western orientalist literature has tended to see Arabic as problematic in its

flexible norms of language use, often attributing the problem to the hegemony of religion. I posit that when we trace the practices of the speech and language communities, we can see that variation in Arabic becomes a problem in practices that require high amounts of standardization, such as schooling.

Now one could contend that the religious practices associated with Arabic literacy are also a highly standardizing process, but this would indicate that a Standard Arabic should have already dominated and displaced the spoken dialects as legitimate means of communication. In contrast, there appears to be a relatively fluid interaction within the speech community that recognizes fusha as a legitimate language of communication in certain agreed upon instances and the regional dialects in others. The “native” speakers in this chapter have felt at ease with this relationship until the increasing accountability and testing in both Standard Arabic and Standard English have highlighted lack of successful acquisition of a grammar centric language. This unease can be traced to the imbalance of power that has historically arisen from colonialism.

Chapter 5: “The Qur’an is in Arabic”

Before entering the field for a second time in 2009, I found myself explaining my research topic to a new acquaintance at a party. She had recently arrived from Syria, having married an American of Syrian descent. As I explained my interest in the diglossic nature of Arabic and wondered out loud about the reasons for keeping Standard Arabic as the language of almost all Arab states as opposed to expanding upon the dialect, she stopped me with these words: “It’s easy to understand the reason. It is because of the Qur’an.” Another conversation, with a very different conclusion, took place after an Arabic conversation hour held at Columbia University in which I had explained, in Standard Arabic, my interest in the linguistic shifts in Qatar and the relationship with language variations within Arabic. The head of the Arabic conversation session, Said, responded that it is a shame that Arabs have not divested themselves from the power of religion. Quoting a prominent Lebanese secular nationalist, he argued that it was ridiculous that he could not write a letter to his mother in the spoken Palestinian dialect that he used to talk to her in on the phone. He continued on to state that religious control over societies in the Middle East was and is a huge problem. This same young man was teaching his spoken Arabic class in Standard Arabic.

These two incidents reflect the diversity of opinions that abound in regards to Arabic and its ties to Islam. Some find this relationship affirming and positive, while others question its efficacy. Academic writing about Arabic has not been devoid of this tendency to place religion at the center of studies of the Middle East (Abu-Lughod 1989). Islam is often viewed as

the key to understanding social issues in the region (Gellner 1983; Geertz 1971). While religion does play a very important role in Muslim societies, it is not one that should be reduced to a symbol or considered a panopticon that keeps everything locked in its symbolic prison. It should also be recognized that religion has increasingly been defined by its shadow, the secular. This chapter engages primarily with Asad's (1986) reformulation of the anthropology of Islam as one that focuses on a *discursive tradition*, which Charles Hirschkind has describe as "an historically evolving set of discourses embodied in the practices and institutions of Islamic societies and hence deeply imbricated in the material life of those inhabiting them" (1996:1). Asad has tried to move the emphasis in the anthropology of religion away from deterministic and essentializing accounts to instead explore the ways in which individuals interact, discursively, with their religious tradition.

Hirschkind's (2006) work on what he terms the "ethical soundscape" is an application of Asad's notion of a *discursive tradition* in its argument for a "counterpublic" in Egyptian cassette sermons. He argues that the ways in which Muslims are asked to attune their ears and their bodies to religious sermons teaches the art of disputation and generates discussion in the neighborhoods of Cairo. Similarly, the medium of satellite television functions comparably in the lives of Arabs and Muslims by creating an auditory and oral medium through which ideas are disseminated and circulated through the Arab public. This media circulation occurs primarily in Standard Arabic, although popular music and television programming is often produced in regional dialects of Arabic. Hirschkind further argues that western societies are primarily "ocularcentric" and have ignored aural and oral communication and the ways in which it shapes ways of thinking, speaking and interacting. This is particularly relevant to a

question of Arabic, in which oral, aural and literacy practices are all important forms used to debate and discuss the import of Islam's central text/recitation, the Qur'an, for Muslims.

The influence and impact of Islam on Arabic is clear from the beginning of this chapter and has been evident throughout the study. I will demonstrate in this chapter, through the use of media and ethnography, that Arabic is not only tied to religion, but also to Arab nationalism. The Qatari leaderships desire to create a "knowledge economy" is matched with a desire to connect with a religious and pan-Arab community of Arabic speakers. This produces some competition and concern for teachers, students and policymakers vis a vis English and also produces an interesting dynamic between secular and religious ways of looking at Arabic language use. I argue that Arabic's relationship with religion is perceived by secularists as its Achilles heel and by nationalists and Islamists as its ideological foothold. While this supports part of Haeri's 1995 argument that Arabic has a strong ideology of the "sacred", I posit that this relationship must be understood within a larger discussion and debate about the role of religion and the secular in Arab societies in which the Islamic discursive tradition is perceived more favorably by Arabs and Muslims, Qatari and non-Qatari. My interlocutors represent Islam as a positive connection for Arabic, one which identifies Arabic as a special and unique language. The ideology of Arabic as essential to Islam has played an important role in history and also in discussions of Arabic's role in Qatari society today. To deny or delegimize this meta-pragmatic view of Arabic is to deny the authority of its users to reflect upon, understand and change their own language practices.

I begin this chapter with a historical and textual reading of the "discursive tradition" in regards to the Arabic language and its relationship with religion. This overview will be

followed by an analysis of major religious scholars in Qatar who have spoken about the intersection of religion, education and culture on a widely broadcasted TV program. This focus on religion will be followed by a turn to the genealogy of secular thought regarding Arabic and the ways in which Arabs in academia and outside it relate to these ideas. While these groupings are not exact, as western scholars have often romanticized Arabic and Arabs and Muslims have romanticized and idealized the secular model of the West, they are helpful for framing the current discourses in Qatar.

My findings indicate that the majority of scholars, students and intellectuals seek reconciliation between Arabic's roots in religion with its contemporary manifestations and variations in dialects and Standard Arabic. The ways in which language functions in Arab societies, somewhere in between and betwixt the people, the nation and God, is an uneasy interplay for secular discourses to contend with. In moving away from viewing religion as a solely semiotic force in the lives of people, which imbues their every action, towards a theory of religion which understands individuals as participating in a set of discourses and practices which have a long history in the region and play integral roles in their daily lives, we begin to understand that language is malleable and a reflection of the polity, whose needs are simultaneously religious, political, cultural and economic. This malleability has been visible throughout the preceding chapters and I will argue that the roots of linguistic "inconsistency", "dis-contemporaneity" or lack of uniformity in Arabic become problematic within a secular view of language, especially one which seeks to define the secular through control of religion.

Hazawi of Arabs, Arabic and the Qur'an

{وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّمَا يُعَلِّمُهُ بَشَرٌ لِّسَانُ الَّذِي يُلْحِدُونَ إِلَيْهِ أَعْجَمِيٌّ وَهَذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِيٌّ مُبِينٌ}

And We certainly know that they say, "It is only a human being who teaches the Prophet. The tongue of the one they refer to is foreign, and this Qur'an is [in] a clear Arabic language"
[16:103]

In the period prior to the revelation of the Qur'an, the Arabs of the region were a Bedouin society who prized verbal jousting and strong memories. Festivals and gatherings of various tribes would pit each tribe's best poets against the other. The first written evidence of Arabic is reputedly on the *Mu'allaqat*, seven hangings placed on the walls of the *Kaa'ba* in *Makkah* to commemorate seven great poets and their poems.⁵⁷ It would come naturally then, as the argument goes in the Qur'an, that the revelation would be revealed in the language so prized by these groups as to bring them together (Qur'an 42:7; 20:113; 13:37; 46:12; 16:103; 39:28; 26:195). Language is what Arabs prided themselves upon and so the Qur'an is presented in a "clear" Arabic language, as a challenge to those who "understand" (Qur'an 43:3; 12:2). While the Qur'an mentions in several places that Arabic was chosen for its clarity, it does not ever say that Arabic is a sacred language, instead it describes it as both eloquent and clear. It also presents a second justification for sending the revelation in Arabic, as it was the language of the messenger it was given to and the language of the people who would first hear the message. Logical as it may seem, it appears many of the critics and doubters of Muhammad questioned the choice of Arabic.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ There is a disagreement as to the actual number of the "hung" poems, whether it was six, seven or even nine.

⁵⁸ This rebuttal is possible because the revelation was sent down incrementally throughout the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, many passages are responses to various events, questions and doubts that were thrown at the Prophet and his fledgling community.

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْءَانًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ ۖ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقُرْ
{وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَٰئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

And if We had made it a Quran in a foreign tongue, they would certainly have said: Why have not its communications been made clear? What! A foreign (tongue) and an Arabian! Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing; and (as for) those who do not believe, there is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them; these shall be called to from a far-off place (41:44)

This verse and the one that opens this section both indicate linguistic diversity in the region where the message was revealed and that many questioned the rationale behind the choice of Arabic as the language of revelation. It further insinuates that the choice of Arabic was because Muhammad was an Arabic speaker and his message was to be shared with his community and those who understood Arabic, not that the language itself was inherently special. Several histories and biographies of Muhammad highlight that he was a very eloquent individual, although supposedly illiterate, who had the ability to speak to tribal groups in their dialects (Haykal 1994; Ibn Kathir 2000). As Islam spread, Muhammad would reward slaves of the growing empire with freedom if they were to teach Muslims how to read. The Arabic of the Qur'an was chosen to become the language of the new empire.

As the community grew, the need to preserve the religious texts and traditions became paramount to the spread of religious and political unity. The earliest work in written Arabic, after the *mu'allaqat*, stemmed from efforts to write the Qur'an in its entirety, an effort which was begun in the time of the Caliph Abu Bakr (573-634). There were several folios of the Qur'an and several pronunciations of the primarily oral revelation. By the time of Uthman's caliphate (644-656 AD), people began to dispute which recitation was the most accurate. Uthman sent for Hafsa's (a widow of the Prophet Muhammad) copy of the Qur'an and asked

four prominent *hufadh*, or memorizers of the Qur'an, to work together to create a uniform version. In a hadith, it is related that Uthman told the group compiling the standard Qur'an, that "If you find yourselves differing, [the three of] you and Zayd ibn Thabit in anything of the Qur'an, write it in the tongue of the Quraysh, for it was not revealed but in their tongue" (Sahih Al Bukhari 6:183-184). Theories abound about the compilation of the Qur'an and the claim that Muslims make as to its authenticity and structural integrity.⁵⁹

Arabs and the A'Jam

The idea that Arabic was chosen because of special and unique qualities as the language of revelation has been a challenge to the growth of the Islamic empire and in the current era of nation-states. As early as the 7th century, disagreements regarding Arabic's form and content stemmed from the growing community and the burgeoning influence of Persians and other linguistic minorities in the empire. These clashes were a struggle over political power and social status as the Arabs were finding their inherited positions as the leaders of the growing *ummah* (community) challenged by the eager, intelligent and ambitious pursuits of the Persians, Central Asians, Turks and other minorities (Chejne 1969). Over the centuries, Arabs and the *a'jam*, or non-Arabs, have debated the merits of Arabic and the necessity for its protection against other encroaching languages and speakers.⁶⁰ Arabic was the language of the renaissance during the

⁵⁹ *I'jaz* or inimitability of the Qur'an is another issue which arose throughout the centuries following the Qur'an's revelation. A claim made in the Qur'an regarding human beings inability to imitate or produce a book similar to the Qur'an was a source of discussion and controversy throughout Islamic history, continuing into oriental studies of the Qur'an.

⁶⁰ **Ayn-Jiim-Miim** = to chew, try by biting. *a'jama* - to speak Arabic imperfectly, abstruse (language). *a'jamiyyun* - foreign, non-Arab, one who has an impediment in speech. *a'jamiyyan* - foreign tongue. *a'jamina* - non-Arabs. *Ajamiy* n.m. 16:103, 41:44, 41:44, pl. acc. 26:198 Lane's Lexicon, Volume 5, pages: [251](#), [252](#), [253](#)

golden age of Islam, in which scholars published, taught and preached. Al Jahiz, writing during the time period of Abbasid Caliphate (7th to 8th century), said of Arabic:

The Arabs have been 'more' eloquent in their expression and they enjoyed a language which was 'richer' in vocabulary, 'terser' and (uniquely) precise in word, the composition of its speech was 'more varied' and the application of proverbs which were in use therein were outstanding and more current (Al Attar 1991).

An Arabic prose writer himself and an adherent of the *mu'atazilite* school of rational thought, Al-Jahiz sought to understand why Arabic would be chosen as the language of the Qur'an. In his book *Kitab al-Bayan*, he argues that Arabic had been, since its origin, a language of immense expression; the language of Prophet Adam and then Prophet Ismail which was nurtured and protected by the Arabs until its last messenger, who would bear the message of the Qur'an. His argument came in the face of growing *shu'ubiya* (linguistic and ethnic nationalism) and the expansion of the empire into lands with strong linguistic cultures such as the Persian, Turkish and the Central Asians. While non-Arabic speakers learned Arabic and often became experts of Arabic grammar, philosophy, law and science, many felt that Arabs placed themselves in positions of superiority over non-Arabs by claiming that non-native speakers could never know Arabic as Arabs did. Arabic, thus became a social and class indicator and those who wanted to achieve greatness in scholarly and political arenas needed to master it (Chejne 1999). Al-Jahiz supported this linguistic hierarchy which placed Arabs closer to the source of the religious tradition, the Qur'an. As we will later see, however, he also sought to understand the role of human free will within the confines of Arabic's preeminence in bearing the message of revelation.

Ibn Khaldun (1958), some 400 years after Al-Jahiz, would express similar views regarding Arabic's superiority and the natural ability of the Arabs in their language. Ibn Khaldun also recognizes the increasing presence of the *a'jam*, non-Arabs, who were mainly Persian, in scholarly studies. He distinguishes between the Arabs and the *a'jam* by using the urban-rural relationship, arguing that the Arabs are much better suited to political pursuits while the city-dwelling *a'jam* naturally lean towards scholarship and more settled crafts and industries. This argument is similar to ones made by Muhammad and Suhaib in the previous chapter that posit Arabic as a primarily oral language, making it difficult for Muhammad and Suhaib to have fluency in the Standard Arabic of writing and reading.

Linguistic Habit or Inimitable Speech?

Both Al Jahiz and Ibn Khaldun wrote at a time of increasing heterogeneity in the Islamic empire when other languages and groups were gaining power. In Ibn Khaldun's own words, *asabiya* or group affinity among other ethnicities was challenging the Arabs dominate status. In reaction, these scholars advocated a religiously spurred belief in Arabic's superiority and beauty. This ideological framing of language as particularly beautiful and pure comes up against a need for a practical approach to language learning. Is the language of revelation, used by a particular tribe of Arabia, acquirable by others? Do others need to acquire it to the extent that it has been perfected in the Qur'an?

Al Jahiz (1995) argued that the Arabic of the Qur'an was the most perfect and inimitable Arabic and human beings could never reach its level not because they were incapable of doing so, but because God had limited them from doing so. This allowed Al-Jahiz to maintain his

belief that humanity *has* the capacity (requiring free will) for great literary work at the level or beyond the Qur'an, but that God needed to limit them in this respect in order to present the most perfect revelation.⁶¹ But this limitation creates a conundrum that continues until today: Does a perception of Arabic as "perfect" limit Arabs from reaching greater linguistic heights? Does it also create a situation in which people feel unnatural speaking "God's language" and instead of a human language?

Ibn Khaldun agrees with Al-Jahiz that Arabs had a fundamental *malaka*, or habituated practice, of Arabic that could not be acquired easily by non-Arabs. But Ibn Khaldun also explicitly states that Arabic is acquirable as all habits can be acquired through repetition and practice (*malaka*). Ibn Khaldun's theory of *malaka* has been interpreted by Saba Mahmood (2004) as most closely resembling the *habitus* of Aristotelian origins. In this section, I quote Ibn Khaldun at length because he addresses both languages as habit and language acquisition by the Arab Bedouins:

Habits that are firmly established and rooted in their proper places appear to be natural and innate in those places. Therefore, many ignorant people who are not acquainted with the importance of habits, think that the correct use of vowel endings and the proper eloquence of Arabs in their language are natural things. They say that "the Arabs speak (correct Arabic) by nature." This is not so. (Correct Arabic speech) is a linguistic habit of (proper) speech arrangement that has become firmly established and rooted (in speakers of Arabic), **so that, superficially, it appears to be something natural and innate. However, as mentioned before, this habit results from the constant practice of Arabic speech and from repeated listening to it and from understanding the peculiar qualities of its word combinations.**

⁶¹ While the *mu'atazilites* (a theological school of thought which advocated reason and logic) believed in a human free will unfettered by God, Al-Jahiz veered from this tenant in his explanation of why Qur'anic Arabic was an area in which the Jabrite (another school of thought which emphasized doctrine of predestination) doctrine might be more applicable (el Attar: 1992).

For comparison, let us assume an Arab child who grows up and is reared among Arab Bedouins. He learns their language and has a good knowledge of the vowel endings and of eloquent (Arabic) expression. He masters (all) that completely, but he does not have any knowledge whatever of grammatical rules. His (correctness and eloquence of speech) is purely the result of the linguistic habit he has obtained. In the same way, **the (linguistic) habit may be acquired by those who live after the time of the (ancient) Arab Bedouins, with the help of expert knowledge of, and constant occupation with, (the documents of) their speech, their poems, and addresses.** This will eventually give them the (linguistic) habit and make them like persons who grew up and were reared among them. The (grammatical) rules cannot do that. (Sec. 51, emphasis mine, Rosenthal)

Ibn Khaldun is very clear on the notion that grammatical rules cannot teach one the essence of Arabic “linguistic habits” or more literally, “habit of the tongue” (*malaka lisaniya* ملكة لسانية). This can only be achieved through exposure to Arabs who have the “Arabic linguistic habit” or by interacting with the documents of Arabic poetry, speeches and addresses. “Natural” language habits are not actually natural at all, according to Ibn Khaldun, because they are acquired through repetition and practice, as all habits are. In connection to Al-Jahiz before him, Ibn Khaldun argues that Arabic is beautiful and special in its choice as the language of revelation, but he disagrees on the point of human ability to acquire and use that beauty, arguing that non-Arabs can acquire through situated learning in a speech community or the texts of their oral speech. He also believes that individuals in urban settings lose the Arabic linguistic habit because they incorporate other languages into their speech habits. Ibn Khaldun is critical of the Arabic speech habits of his time, saying that the intermixing and allowing other languages to mix with Arabic lead to “corruption” (*fasad* فساد) of the Arabic language (sec. 46).

The evolution of this debate through history has resulted in two trends: one in which Arabic is connected to the Qur’anic claim of inimitability and considered to difficult to acquire and learn and another, in which Arabic is viewed as a language that can be acquired, but only

through connecting yourself to speech habits and practices of those who have the Arabic linguistic habit. In both scenarios, Arabic is tied to the Qur'an and to the Arabs. Another perspective should be added, that of the non-Arab, or the *a'jam*, on what the relationship of Arabic is to the Qur'an. For this perspective, I turn to the program *al shariah wal hayat* (Islamic Law and Life) on the Qatari funded satellite channel Al Jazeera.

Hazawi of Al-Jazeera's

Al Jazeera is reflective of the Emir of Qatar and his wife's vision of Arab societies as democratic and Islamic. Although it is often criticized for partisan journalism, particularly in the case of coverage of Bahrain's revolutions, it also played a crucial role in the Egyptian revolution and its coverage of the revolts in that country were lauded by many in the Middle East and North America. The station reflects a desire on the part of the ruling family to create bridges between states in the region, with Qatar serving as an exemplary model and financial centerpiece to an Arab and Islamic revival. Al Jazeera's programming provides a unique range of perspectives and views. Although it leans towards Islam and Arab ideologies of language, culture and religion, it does try to represent the range of views present throughout the Middle East. Both Arabic and English Al Jazeera stations try to incorporate technology and new social media into their news coverage. They also have been working to get their stations broadcast in Europe and North America. Many Arabs in the diaspora watch Al Jazeera for news coverage of the region and it has changed the way in which public media is viewed from both western and Middle Eastern perspectives. It is a news channel that has stirred up controversy in the region

and given Arabs a platform to discuss, debate and share important stories happening throughout the region through the medium of technology and in Standard Arabic.

In the following two shows on the popular Al Jazeera show, *al shariah wal hayat* (Islamic Law and Life), religious scholars from two states in the Gulf take on the task of describing Arabic's importance to Muslims and the relationship Arabic has with the dialects. The first of these discussions on *shariah wal hayat* is with guest speaker Dr. Inayat Allah Iblag who is the head of the Arabic Department at Kuwait University. Although this show is older (1998), it provides an interesting contrast to that of the show's main speaker, Yusuf Al Qaradawi, on the Arabic language situation in 2007 and 2009.⁶² As an a'jam, Dr. Inayat's perspective on Arabic is notably absent of Arab ethno-nationalism. Instead, he focuses on what *obligations* Muslims have towards the Qur'an and to learning Arabic.

Learn Arabic out of Love, not Obligation

Dr. Inayat is Afghani in ethnicity, a non-Arab, who has learned and mastered fusha. The questions the moderator, Ahmed Mansoor, poses to him include the responsibility of Muslims toward the Arabic language and the ways in which historical conflicts have diluted Arabic's impact and reach. Ahmed is concerned with why Arabic has not been able to continue its path of dissemination and is now in a less powerful position throughout the world (in contrast to its dominance during the Middle Ages). Dr. Inayat provides responses to his questions that primarily emphasize the distinction between religious obligation (*fard* فرض) and love (حب *hub*).

⁶² This show, like all other shows on the satellite news channel, has viewership from all over the Arab world and the diaspora in Europe and America. Anyone who has access to satellite television may access the channel either for free or for a fee.

Dr. Inayat argues that the Qur'an inspires love of Arabic (*tahbeeb* تحبيب) and does not promote Arabization (Ta'reeb تعريب), which would only become a burden (*taklif* تكليف) upon the Muslim.⁶³ Therefore, while it is obligatory upon those who want to engage intellectually with the Islamic tradition to learn Arabic, the average believer is only required to be able to read the Qur'an and use it in his or her prayers. Although it is encouraged to learn Arabic and understand the Qur'an's meaning in its original form, it is acceptable to read translations and interpretations of the Qur'an in other languages. In regards to the question of dialects of Arabic, Dr. Inayat says:

"Up until this point, we have been talking about the fusha language, but in regards to the colloquial language, the colloquial language has two roles: the first is as culture, because we don't deny its importance. But if the colloquial language and the desire to study it becomes the reason for eliminating the fusha language, then it is upon us to not recognize the colloquial language if the promotion of the colloquial contradicts the knowledge of the secrets of the Blessed Quran. So what I mean is that it is contradictory, if we have built our dialogue upon the goal of studying the rules of the Arabic language, to support the dialects.

But even with this, we do not deny the importance of the spoken language as popular culture and in its secondary status, it has its own importance, but by condition that we remain committed to the original Islamic goal and that is knowledge of the secrets of the Blessed Qur'an through the means of the fusha language."

Dr. Inayat stays focused on expressing the religious view of the Arabic language which for him is deeply connected to the Qur'an. In his most rigid statement, following the above conversation, he states that Arabic grammar comes primarily from the Qur'an and efforts to change it are antithetical to its preservation. He unequivocally states that the fusha of the Qur'an should not be changed. But in the larger context of the discussion, Dr. Inayat emphasizes the role of both

د. عناية الله إبلاغ : تعريب اللغة العربية معناه التكليف، والإسلام لم يكلف الشعوب المسلمة، الشعوب المفتوحة بأن يتعلموا اللغة العربية، لأن الإسلام...⁶³ (لا يكلف الله نفساً إلا وسعها) وهذا خارج عن الوسع والطاقة، فالتعريب شيء والتحبيب شيء، والتحبيب والتعريب مش يعرف بالطرق المختلفة كما ورد في الحديث النبوي أن الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : " أحب العرب لثلاثة : لأن القرآن عربي وأنا عربي وكلام أهل الجنة عربي " فمعناه جعل الموقف في موقف التحبيب يعني.. يعني شوق الناس لتعلمه ولكن لم يكلفهم

fusha and *ammiya*, the term he uses for languages used in everyday speech. He states that the latter type of language is fine for cultural purpose, but it should not usurp fusha. He clarifies the responsibility Muslims have towards Arabic, predicated on the difference between obligation and love. While religious faith should inspire a desire and love of learning the language of the Qur'an, Muslims are not required by their faith to learn Arabic. This appears to vex the host, who repeatedly questions Dr. Inayat on the reasons why Arabic stopped its spread. Was it the fault of the Ottomans? The Arabs themselves who don't respect their own language? Or the fault of Muslims who advocate their own languages and don't learn Arabic? Callers at the end of the show, Arabs from Holland and Egypt, lament the decline of Arabic and the lack of respect Arabs show towards their "own" language.

"Resisting Cultural Colonization"

Yusuf Qaradawi, the show's main scholar, has a different attitude and tone towards Arabic than that of Dr. Inayat Allah, perhaps influenced by his political philosophy as the intellectual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Qaradawi's use of fusha is very impressive and his religious sermons on Fridays at the oldest mosque in Qatar, the Omar bin Khattab mosque, are highly attended and televised on Qatar television. His sermons often connect historical movements, Qur'anic verses, the life and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and Arabic proverbs to contemporary political, economic and spiritual struggles. He moved to Qatar in 1961 after being imprisoned several times by King Faruq and Gamal Abdul Nasser who both strongly opposed the Brotherhood's activities in Egypt. He was granted Qatari citizenship by the then Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifa, and became the Dean of the Islamic Studies program

at Qatar University in 1977. From his various posts, he has published prolifically about Islam and the path forward for Muslims, becoming famous for his *fatwas*, or religious edicts about living life according to Islamic religious law.⁶⁴

His show on Al Jazeera is one of the most watched shows across the region and the Arab diaspora. He is usually the main scholar in residence, but when he is unavailable, religious scholars and specialists such as Inayat Allah Iblag above, are invited to the show. Qaradawi discusses Arabic in two sessions, one in 2007 and another in 2009. Both share themes of cultural occupation, the importance placed on learning English and other foreign languages over Arabic, the increasing rise of the dialects in spheres where they were not normative and the rise of private English education. In contrast to Inayat Allah, Qaradawi takes a hardline position toward Arabs who don't respect their own special position of access to the language of the Qur'an. He blames Arabs for the decline of Arabic, and in the 2009 show, Qaradawi focuses on Qatar as a case study. In this segment, which is toward the conclusion of the show, Qaradawi reflects upon the resistance of the people towards cultural colonization by languages other than fusha.

Othman Othman (The Moderator): Why have we returned again to this resistance to cultural colonization?

Yusuf Al Qaradawi: It has returned because in the presence of colonialism, people feel resistance. When there is no presence of colonialism, we don't feel this resistance, but there continues to be a stream that resists this, that resists these colloquials in every place and resists the foreign languages. **The foreign language schools are among the most dangerous things to the Arabic language.** Here in Qatar, there are so many foreign schools to which the children of the upper class and the middle class go and they

⁶⁴ One such *fatwa*, given in (), regarding Palestinian suicide bombers, landed Qaradawi in hot water and resulted in him being banned from the United States and several other countries.

hardly know any Arabic. I see some small children that enter these schools and they can't respond to their people, **as if they live as strangers in their own land** and aren't able to read the daily newspapers and can't follow a program on television or on the radio and they think about their response in English and then translate into Arabic. Look what happens. These schools are dangerous and in addition, they don't study the history of their country, but instead study the history of Britain and British civilization and the people of Britain and their conquests and they don't know anything about the history of Islam. Some families try to complement this with private teachers to reduce the danger, but they can't reduce the danger completely. Here in Qatar, there is English language, English in the private schools, English in the independent schools and English in the companies and the organizations, then the language of the dialects, the Arabic dialects are different, the Qatari dialect, the languages of Asia, the dialects of the Asians because of the numbers of Asian workers. The gardener, the driver, the servant and the nanny and all of these individuals live in one house and from different countries and the children learn from these servants and nannies, and they don't hear the mom. The mom is busy with herself and her beauty and her friends and the father is busy with his friends and his business or his money and the children are with the servant. The servant is the one who teaches language and is the one who teaches understanding, here, this is the danger. **We must stand against this danger and we must have a political desire and we need public awareness.**

Although this is a lengthy quote, it encompasses many of the issues facing Qatar from the perspective of a religious and cultural ideologue who has lived several decades in Qatar and who has strong allegiances to a pan-Islamist and Arab movement. Qaradawi's finishing words are fighting words in which he attacks particular aspects of Qatari society and its progressive moves towards westernization and its consequent effects. He specifically criticizes sending children to English schools where they become linguistic, cultural and religious strangers and bringing them up in households where nannies and servants from all different parts of the world are given the responsibility of raising the children and teaching them language.

Whereas Dr. Inayat was fairly removed from Qatar and provided a perspective on Arabic and religion which distinguished political, linguistic and religious lines of inquiry, Dr. Qaradawi conflates them all within the challenges he sees to Arabic, in particular, to Qatari society. His

blatant displeasure with the rise in English language private schools and in the independent schools of the new public education system is also a message to the ruling family who has undertaken these measures. Following Qaradawi's first talk on Arabic in 2007, the Qatar Foundation opened the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies whose aim is to "enhance research into Islamic culture and promote the diversity and tolerance of the Islamic Fiqh, or understanding" (QFIS Website 2011). Following the 2009 talk, Sheikha Mozah announced at the Education City graduation, the launch of a center called Sheikh Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Thani (a member of the ruling family) Center for Muslim Contribution to Civilization. In addition, Qatar Foundation also put money into a Heritage Library and several projects to "protect Qatar's heritage," which include an Arab Modern Art Museum and the Arabic children's channels Al Jazeera for Children and Baraem.

Qaradawi's presence in Qatar and his pulpit, both approved by the government, are signs of the intersection between pan-Arabism and the desire of the Qatari government to be connected to other Arab states and towards a larger Islamic movement. While the current Emir and Sheikha Mozah respect Qaradawi, they are not his patrons in the way the Emir's father Sheikh Khalifa used to be. Qaradawi is allowed to organize, mobilize and create initiatives, but he is not the religious arm of the government and as seen in the above quote, he often criticizes or extol's Qataris for their perceived virtues and vices. These two scholars represent a fraction of the discursive tradition in relationship to fusha and while both support the strength and dominance of the language with strong linkages to the Qur'an, they take very different views based on their political, ethnic and social positions. Dr. Inayat is not a politician, but an academic, and he understands Arabic language from the perspective of a believer -- as creating

a relationship with the Qur'an. Dr. Qaradawi, as a political persona, with a historical and contemporary commitment to Islamic movements, finds in Arabic a tool for unifying several projects: that of the Arab revival and political mobilization and that of religious unity and faith. For Qaradawi, these two agendas are intricately woven together in the lives of Arab Muslims. In addition to connecting with religious discourse, pan-Arab nationalists have looked to European and American political systems and ideas for developing post-colonial Arab states. In the following sections, we look at Arabic from the perspective of the "secular", defined by a history of narratives regarding the proper role of religion in Middle East societies.

Hazawi of the Secular

While Muslim and Arabs scholars in the previous section tend to posit a positive valence to Arabic in its status as the language of Qur'anic revelation, western scholarship has struggled with how to categorize a language with a strong history and contemporary tie to religious faith. During the Middle Ages, Arabic was the interest of a limited group of translators, called Arabists, who wanted to benefit from the intellectual fruits of Andalusia's scholars. The actual language and its structure came under further scrutiny during the 19th century, with the emergence of philology and the group of scholars whose interest in the Middle East earned them the title of orientalists. Edward Said (1978) criticized orientalists for their depiction and treatment of Arabs and the Arabic language because of their presentation of both the people and the language as inferior to that of the west. Arabic and Hebrew, as Semitic languages, were both considered by scholars such as Ernest Renan as dead and incapable of growth (Said 1978). Since scholarship in and on the language up until this point was primarily conducted by

Muslims, the rising interest of non-Muslims in the language led to an increasing focus on the role of Islam in the language's growth and development. In the colonial period, colonial powers placed greater emphasis on proposing their own languages for study and teaching in schools and in the French contexts, encouraged the use of spoken languages such as Amazigh and the Moroccan dialect (Hoffman 2008; Starrett 1999).

These policies toward Arabic and Islam led inadvertently to the unification of Arabs and other minorities throughout the region under the banner of Arab nationalism in order to defeat the colonial powers. Language was increasingly tied to the creation of an Arab polity (Suleiman 2003). As new states would increasingly be responsible for disseminating the linguistic identity of the Arabs and ethnic minorities who lived throughout the region, Arab intellectuals throughout the region began to extrapolate aspects of secular political thought and integrate them with Arab and Islamic history. The rise of nationalism meant the rise of Arabic, or one unifying language to connect the Arab people.

Taha Hussein and Sati' Al Husari tried to tackle these issues as directors of major education reform in the 20th century. They both believed in the power of education, but differed slightly in their opinion of pan-Arab nationalism and the relationship with European nationalist ideas. Hussein attempted to unite Egypt under the banner of a nationalism rooted in its Pharaonic character that he argued made Egypt open to both European influence and Islamic and Arab empires. Thus, he proposed that Arabic language be used in education, but that Egyptians maintain their sense of identity through the distinct patterns of Egyptian speech, which could incorporate both European and Arabic languages. Husari was far more zealous in his desire for an Arab nationalism which would create a unity among Arabs throughout the

region. He devoted much of his life to building a strong Arabic curriculum based in religious and cultural history of the region in Iraq and Syria (Suleiman 2003). Although he drew upon European nationalists such as Herder and Fichte to espouse his theory of nationalism based on the Arabic language, Suleiman (2003) argues that he merely did so in order to solidify his already strong belief in language as the foundation of the nation. These ethno-nationalist movements took hold of Arabic as a unifying element that crosscut major populations throughout the region. In addition, they responded to the colonial occupation that in many parts of the region had denigrated and attempted to delegitimize the role of religious groups, leaders and institutions throughout Arab and Muslim lands. In the post-colonial period, the state and the religious institutions attempted to find a balance of powers through which each could serve the population. Each state throughout the region drew upon a varied sociopolitical and historical discourse to create unique relationships between the state and religious institutions (Hoffman 2008; Mitchell 1988; Segalla 2009; Starrett 1998; Messick 1991).

The metapragmatic knowledge of these ongoing critiques of language in Arab and Muslim societies plays an important role in mediating western sources of knowledge about language. The willingness to learn from and expand upon western theories of language and education, coupled with a strong religious and cultural sentiment, form the competing dyads of the question of Arabic language in Qatari society. While Arabic has been historically integrated through a framework of religious education and English is currently being integrated through math, science and technology education, the notion of one language defining the Qatari nation, even that of one's own dialect, is complicated by constant usage of "foreign" languages. In the following debates, the contestations over Arabic's relationship to "modernity," Islam and

western states are fundamental talking points for understanding how Arabic *should* function in Arab societies.

Is the Arabic Language Disappearing?

On the Al Jazeera show *Itijah Al Mua'kis* (translated by me as Counter Points and by Al-Jazeera as The Opposite Direction), there have been two debates about Arabic, its variations and its role in Arab societies since 2000. The first debate took place on April 8, 2008 between writer Ali Arsan and poet Rafiq Rohana, the former defending Standard Arabic and the latter advocating the development of *ammiya* (regional dialects of Arabic).⁶⁵ The host, Faisal al-Qassem, begins the show with a series of comments and questions about Arabic's position in contemporary politics and with a poll that reports 86.4 percent of Arabs asked believed that fusha was in danger of disappearing. They used the Arabic word, *inqiraad* انقراض, which is usually translated as 'endangered.' In the beginning of the show, Rohana asks permission to speak the Lebanese language during his defense of it. Partway through the program, the host, Dr. Faisal, asks him to switch to fusha because the viewers in Morocco and Algeria and other places will not be able to understand him, to which Rohana replies that these same individuals would never use fusha to speak to their fathers, mothers or wives and even goes so far as to challenge viewers to try to speak fusha for the remainder of the show. Dr. Ali's defense of fusha runs along political and cultural lines, arguing that it was in the interests of the West and Israel for the Arab's to divide themselves and lose their identity and long rooted connection to

⁶⁵ I will be using the Arabic words fusha rather than translating it into English in this section. It conveys the ways in which individuals think and talk about Arabic as a unified whole in the Standard and where there are disagreements in English as to whether fusha is a unified whole or a distinct language from the dialects of Arabic.

Arab and Islamic history. He feels that fusha is the language of knowledge, a high language with a rich tradition and that it is the mother of all dialects. Dr. Rafik responds back that when a language is no longer on the tongues of people, it is dead, and therefore fusha has a serious problem, but one which would benefit from the history of Latin, which instead of fighting the growth of the vernacular, allowed for the development of French, German, Spanish and English. He argues that the Arabs are fighting against the natural course of language development, holding onto terminology and grammar which is no longer viable and used “in the street” by the people.

In the second series held on the topic, Dr. Faisal again moderates a debate between another poet Anwar Imran and a member of the Arabic Language Council, Dr. Mamdouh, but this time the discussion is focused on why Arabic is no longer in touch with the people, rather than on the brink of extinction. The implications are similar, but the opposing side, unlike Rohana, is not arguing for the usurping of fusha with the dialects but a more medial language that accommodates and incorporates new definitions and words quickly. The emphasis is on fusha’s rigidity and inflexibility. In this show, almost ten minutes are spent on the question of why the word for “computer” in Arabic fusha (حاسوب *hasub*), was not being adopted in spoken Arabic and instead people like to use the English word transliterated into Arabic which is *kambuter* كمبيوتر. This was viewed as a sign of fusha’s incompatibility with modernity or the pace of modern life. Al Jazeera as a pulpit for Arabic fusha is signaled out by both the host and the pro-

fusha debaters for its contribution and role in developing the language and making it a living breathing entity in the homes of Arabs across the world, including the diaspora.⁶⁶

This latter debate is interrupted by a very heated exchange with a caller, Nadal Naissa, who disparages fusha and insults the fusha proponent. This caller spurred several other individuals to post comments and videos and articles denouncing him as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim. Many people in the comments section of YouTube curse Naissa for degrading Arabic and label him a Zionist, mainly for comments he has made on other shows on Al Jazeera against Palestine and in defense of Israel. This side story is relevant because the role of “western powers” is highlighted in both shows as reasons why Arabic fusha is in danger. In addition to the mention of English and French language education, this political agenda and perceived “war” on Arabic is a major defense for protecting fusha from influence by any other language, including regional Arabic dialects.

Religion also plays a central role in both discussions, although more so in the latter discussion in which Dr. Mamdouh answers the question of Arabic’s sacredness with the following:

If an individual believes that Arabic is sacred, that is his opinion. I do not want to argue with them about what they hold sacred. For me personally, as a scholar of language, I don’t differentiate between languages. Each one has its strengths, each has its weaknesses, and things that are not ideal, all of the languages of the world. And Arabic is like them, there is difficulty in it and easiness. In truth, I love Arabic and I respect it, but I don’t take away from other languages. But if I love my language, then I should

⁶⁶ But this does not preclude the use of *ammiya* on the show by speakers and guests and especially during news clips when interviews of people “in the street” show the range of dialects spoken throughout the Arab world. But the channel’s preferences are clear and in my field research in Doha, I discovered that Al-Jazeera was known to have a strong editorial policy towards its language use, with Tunisians, Moroccan and Algerians dominating this sector. Where Al-Jazeera Arabic focuses mainly on political and economic issues, its English counterpart has several shows on cultural themes throughout the region. Whether this difference lies in the question of which language would take prominence in segments on culture in the Arab world, fusha or *ammiya*, would be a fascinating study in its’ own right, since most talk shows and cultural programming are broadcast in local dialects throughout the region.

prefer it to others and make it better by making it the language of knowledge, not just the language of writers or poets, but I want it to be the language of poetry, literature, science, physics, chemistry and medicine. (Trans. from Arabic)

Throughout the discussions, even the definition of language is contested. The poet Rafik Rohana distinguishes between dialects (*lahja لهجة*) and language (*lugha لغة*) saying that the *ammiya* (dialects) are languages in their own right because they are different in both vocabulary and structure from fusha. Those who are pro-fusha argue in turn that all languages have a range of standard to dialectical variation, Mamdouh, in particular, cites French policy that protects the French standard from the various regional dialects encroachment. In addition, Dr. Mamdouh and Dr. Ali both argue that the illiterate individual in the Arab states does not have trouble watching or listening to Standard Arabic on the radio and television, even if they may not speak the language in its “correct” form in their daily life. Both of the shows also reference schools, teachers and foreign language education as major areas that contribute to poor Standard Arabic education. The pro-fusha debaters in both telecasts argue that the curriculum must improve greatly and higher education should not contribute to the “death” of Arabic by employing foreign languages such as English and French in their teaching.

This latter point, regarding what is language and who defines its’ parameters, is integral to the perceived role of schools in society. The quality, methodology and success of Arabic language teachers are questioned throughout both debates with the host going so far as to note that he was only able to properly learn Standard Arabic abroad in England and not in his own home country of Egypt. In addition to this program’s discussions of Standard Arabic were two other shows on Al-Jazeera, in which prominent figures in politics and religion in the region also blamed private schools and parents who sent their children to them for the increasing use

of English in the region and among young people. From these various conversations, it is clear that fusha is perceived as being under siege from many sides-- from the dialects, from foreign languages (and their political agendas) and from poor Arabic language pedagogy. It is also obvious that native speakers are thinking about the issue of Arabic's language variability and the struggle to control and define the parameters of a language which has so many variations within the speech community. But these discussions are not overtly related to religion or tradition, focusing instead on stagnation and lack of development and a contrast between Arab speech practices and those of Europeans and westerners. The belief that fusha must be protected is emphasized from a perspective of social, cultural and political activism. Pro-fusha proponents argue that Arabic should not be denigrated or derided, but it should be developed and made to reflect the beauty of the language and its history. Anti-fusha debaters are largely marginalized in both conversations and the host shows a strong preference for the pro-fusha debaters, although actively questioning the lack of development and teaching of fusha, in order that people may use it. Al Jazeera's role is especially critical in both debates as the news channel requires anchors and hosts to use fusha. While guests and news clips showcase a range of Arabic dialects, the anchors and news reporters always ask their questions in fusha regardless of how guests or interviewees respond.⁶⁷

The above debates demonstrate a meta-pragmatic view of Arabic that recognizes the divergence between regional Arabic dialects and fusha. But the majority of callers continue to support and advocate a strong political, cultural and economic alliance with fusha for Arabs.

⁶⁷ On Al Jazeera's documentary channel, Arabs from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and a few other states are often either dubbed or their words are translated into fusha and closed captioned.

Only one caller, Nadal Naissa, insists that fusha should be eradicated in favor of regional dialects. There is a plethora of discussion and debate about how to make fusha the language of literacy, politics and culture. A summary of these views can be found in one of the most “liked” comments on the shows youtube page by *alwaysambitious*:

The call to care for the Arabic language does not mean that people must speak fusha in the street, but we must be logical and the practical means to protect it. For example, that we try to ensure that we use words from fusha as much as possible, without exaggeration or concavity. So that we bring the dialects closer to fusha as much as possible and that it improves gradually. We must simplify the rules of Arabic and develop the teaching methods. Greetings to all those who love Arabic and take care of it. What makes advocates of the dialects are those who most likely want evil to befall Islam (Translated from Arabic by Author).

As seen in this response, the internal differences between fusha and the dialects are acknowledged, but the argument to promote the regional Arabic dialects is generally disregarded as a secular plot. Al Jazeera’s viewership comprises Arabs from Qatar, the Middle East and the Arab diaspora. The majority opinion appears to side with the pro-fusha debaters who argue that Arabic must be protected from extinction and derision from those who seek to do harm to Arabs and Muslims. While Rohana and Imran try to advocate for redefining the role of fusha and replacing it with the regional dialects, this argument does not appear to be successful. What creates more discussion is the perceived war on Islam and Arabs by the west and the encroachment of English and other foreign languages. This makes individuals angry enough to respond to Nadal Naissa and Rafik Rohana by calling them traitors and anti-Islam.

These media based discussions, which occur primarily in fusha, illustrate the ways in which Arabs understand their own language use in the context of historical, political and geographic scales. There is acknowledgement of Arabic’s variation in oral practices and a desire to bring Standard Arabic and the regional dialects closer together. There is also a strong

representation of the west as being secular and against Islam. This conscious knowledge of the ways in which Arabic is treated by the “west” creates a stronger force of “resistance”, that Yusuf Qaradawi also noted in his response to “cultural colonization” in Qatar.

Conclusion: Metapragmatics of fusha and the dialects

“No they are not different, they are very similar and share similar words, many words come from fusha... we don’t use another alphabet to write about *ammiya*. We use *ammiya* to express emotion more often, our feelings”

-Dr. Fatima

“Everything comes from spoken word, it is the source. But we write in fusha and speak in the *ammiya*... *ammiya* is about sounds, orality, tonality, nuances you can’t really understand”

Dr. Kuwari

This chapter explored the genealogical origins of fusha with a focus on its’ relationship with Islam. The history of thinking, writing and talking about Arabic as an important tool for unifying Muslims and Arabs allowed us to see the convergence, early on in history, between Arab political aspirations and the language of Islam’s central text, the Qur’an. While the Qur’an itself is ambiguous about Arabic’s “sacredness,” it does posit that the language was chosen for its beauty and eloquence to bear the message of God. This special status placed Arabs in a position of authority and strength over non-Arabs during the growth of the Islamic Empire. Scholars such as Al-Jahiz and Ibn Khaldun argued for the superiority of Arabs and Arabic in their seminal writings, wary of the rising influence of non-Arabs in politics and intellectual pursuits.

In the modern period, two religious scholars reflect these complex origin stories; one in which Arabic is a medium of a religious message and one in which it supports Arab political mobilization in the name of Islam. While Dr. Inayat Allah, a non-Arab, continues to see Arabic as essentially a medium through which access to God's message is made possible and more clear, Yusuf Qaradawi uses the role of Arabic as the language of the Qur'an to espouse a political message of Arab and Islamic revival. Qaradawi is interested in both the political and religious potentials inherent in unifying around and through the Arabic language.

In contrast to this strong religious discourse, is the influence and impact of secular western ideas regarding language's role in creating the nation. Arab nationalists such as Taha Hussain and Sati' Al Husari both took up the banner of Arabic under reformulations of theories of European nationalism. The belief that language as a necessary foundation for the unity of the nation required that fusha be held up as the ideal of new Arab nation-states and within the opposition to colonialism, Arab nationalists also sought to defend what was distinctly theirs versus what colonial powers had insisted would develop Arab and Muslim societies. The history of colonialism and its language policies against Arabic and in particular, the role of religious groups in defeating and pushing out colonial powers, is present in contemporary debates and discussions about the role of Arabic in society.

This is most apparent in debates on Al-Jazeera's show, *itijah al mu'akis*, where Arabs from various parts of the Arab world debate the role of Arabic and its diversity of dialects. While one individual, Rafiq Rohana, supports the use of the regional dialects as the language of literacy and political nationalism, he is outnumbered by the host and those who advocate fusha

as the language of Arab history, religion and politics. The place of the regional dialects is submerged under the important role of Arabic fusha, which is viewed as essential to Arab identity, history and contemporary political mobilization against western powers such as America and Israel. There is a belief, represented through colonial history and policies, that the “West” would like nothing better than to divest Arab societies of their attachment to fusha and to Islam.

This genealogical approach allows one to see how ideologies of Arabic have been shaped by religion and secularism, the definitions of which also shift based on the language and culture one is studying. The interconnecting of Arab identity with an Islamic one has been challenged by secularists in the region and by western orientalist desiring to separate religion in the model of western European nations. This western project continues to play an important role in the metapragmatics of talking about Arabic as Arabs reference Israel and the West as being against Islam and fusha. In a political move, those who are religiously inclined and those who are politically inclined to support Arab nationalism, have found in each other allies against the encroachment of western secularism and colonialization. Each bolsters the others importance in the lives of Arabs and Muslims in order to create a unified front against threats from the outside world. Any effort to divide the language is viewed as an assault on religion and Arab culture. Attempts to vernacularize the regional dialects and move Arabs beyond a “dependence” on Islam are met with “resistance” and this resistance can be traced all the way back to the works of early Muslim scholars.

The ideological view of Arabic as the language of the Qur’an, found in the writings of religious intellectuals, coupled with the western ideology of language as identity (produced by

European nationalists and adopted/adapted by Arab nationalists), produces a strong connection to Arabic, in all its forms, that can be seen in the speech of Arabs about their own Arabic language use. The majority of Arabs whom I met over the course of my fieldwork did not appear to have a problem with the distance between fusha and the dialects in the speech community, but were finding it difficult to reconcile fusha's historical status in the Arabic language community with its less prominent place in a Qatari society where literacy is increasingly tied to English. It is a contestation between different ideologies of language, one in which Arabic reflects a religious polity that uses Arabic literacy occasionally, a nationalist ideology that uses language for in group communication and then a final one in which language is disconnected from society, "de-localized" and placed in a position of being a pure medium of communication. All three exist in regards to Arabic, but they also exist in regards to English. What is at issue in Qatar is not the value of Arabic to Qataris, but how to make these ideologies of Arabic competitive with a "de-localized" English language that is represented as ideally suited to carry knowledge throughout the globe. Arabic is stuck, in the oral speech community, in the traditions of a religious texts and oral stories and in a particular history. To make Arabic global and mobile, means either following in the footsteps of English and de-localizing Arabic from its natural roots in Arab society and Islamic discursive traditions or to continue to encourage its speakers and users to tell their stories and histories through the multiple languages that resonate with them.

Conclusion: Language in the Mirror

Through its absence, my very own native language (Arabic) came to allure me. You see, language is a pillar in the very societal fabrics of reality. Imbued within its phraseology and wording are chief cultural keys. This is why the monologues of my scatterbrain came to mostly find solace with Arabic language students. As I have touched upon in my previous essay, God and reverberations of faith are appealed to in the most mindless of murmurs and most casual of chattered back in many Arab cultures. For a believer however living in a religiously hegemonic culture, it never proved necessary to discern why I for one come to voice such categorically religious elements in my everyday speech. More importantly, it never proved necessary to work out whether it is possible to still speak Arabic idiomatically and yet consciously veer away from such elements.

Answers only came from the experiences of many of my friends who are studying Arabic as a foreign language. Quite keenly, many came to reveal to me how, in speaking Arabic, they find themselves as if dragged into a realm of faith, even despite themselves. They spoke of finding themselves voicing notions that they do not consciously believe in and that they would perhaps never consciously choose to pronounce in their native languages. The very language of the Arab world seems to open a door to a rather different reality and a different paradigm altogether.

I could not help but sturdily nod as I curl back again into the back of my mind. **With a fairly bilingual upbringing, I have always felt to be caught in a sway between two different realities that do not mix but in which I yet equally dwell. It has always been through language that my very world seems to tune to one archetype or the other, as it is through language that I have always come to see the spirits of these archetypes unraveled.** A mark of my very existence however, I have never been pushed to conceptualize it neither to myself nor to others as I am now. Never did I need to embark on a language's elements of religiosity or lack thereof, regardless of how more neutral such a lack admittedly is. Never did I need to infer any conclusions. In its absence however, the Arabic language, and the peculiarities of the culture pinned to it are crystallized more than ever before. In its absence, it is as if one of my very realities slip ever so slowly away; a reality ever so peculiar in a language whose every word leads to God.

Sarah Samad on "Religion, Language and Reality"

Sarah was the valedictorian of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service in Qatar in 2010. I met her on a bus ride while going to get state required medical tests in the fall of 2009. I discovered that she was Egyptian and liked the diversity of students she lived and studied with in Doha. She had attended English language schools for much of her life and was fluent in writing and reading English and speaking Egyptian Arabic, but not as comfortable in speaking and using Standard Arabic. She had written this piece following a study abroad experience in Scotland. She mentions in her reflection that she had a “fairly bilingual upbringing,” but it was not until she arrived in Scotland that the ties of Arabic to Islam began to “unravel”.

In this reflection, there are moments of Whorfian linguistic relativity, meta-pragmatic awareness, bilingualism and tensions between the secular (a “neutral” category devoid of religion) and the religious (described as hegemonic). In Scotland, Sarah becomes attuned to the “peculiarities” of Arabic, a language in which she states “every word leads to God.” When I came upon this reflection, I was intrigued by how similar Sarah, myself and Niloofar Haeri evaluated Arabic as a “religious language” when it was placed in juxtaposition within a Western context of secular language. It is also relevant that all three of us automatically privileged the secular model of European language over that Arabic. Why was Arabic so strange? Or were we (becoming) strangers to Arabic?

Sarah’s reflection becomes more intriguing when placed in the context of an incident that occurred towards the end of my field work. Sarah and another Georgetown student, Nouf, were involved in a scandal of sorts in May 2010. The two students were asked to represent SFS-Q at a conference on, “*Watan* and the *Mowatan*” [Nation and the Citizen]: Persistent

Questions in a New Arab Millennium” being held at a hotel in Qatar. It was the last day of the conference and the girls were on a panel with several leading Arab thinkers, including Wadah Khanfar, the head of Al Jazeera at the time. A controversy arose when Nouf and Sarah refused to speak Arabic in front of the audience of primarily Arabs. The students argued that since this was an “international conference,” they were under the impression that it would be acceptable to speak English. This led to discussion and debate about what universities like Georgetown in Qatar were doing to the identity of Arab youth, leaving them unable to express themselves in Arabic at a conference on nationality and citizenship in the Arab world.⁶⁸

In the incident that occurred in Doha, Sarah was in the context of Arabic speakers, most of whom were proficient in both Standard Arabic and a regional language, a norm in the Arabic speech community. The expectation in this setting, where a language community was being performed, was that the speakers would use Standard Arabic when giving their talks. When Sarah and Nouf disregarded these norms, there ensued a debate about the role of English language schools in making the future generation of Arabs strangers to the Arabic language. In this context, it is not religion per se, but identity that is in question. There are certain norms by which Arabs utilize the many varieties of Arabic and different norms for when it is appropriate to use “foreign” languages. In this arena, Standard Arabic is not perceived as “too religious,” but the appropriate language for communicating within the language community.

⁶⁸ The controversy led Georgetown to bring in a journalist to cover their Arabic language programs in order to counteract the bad publicity. A photographer took pictures of Ahmad Banna and his Arab Political Thought class and there was an article circulated regarding Georgetown and Education City’s efforts to improve Standard Arabic instruction.

In the first (written) reflection on language in Scotland, Sarah becomes meta-pragmatically aware that Arabic has many features tied to religious expression that English does not. While she tries to find comfort with fellow (non-native) Arabic speakers, she increasingly realizes how “different” Arabic is from English in its reliance on religious terminology. She further suggests that these religious elements are “mindless murmurs” and that she is coming to realize that this makes Arabic less “neutral” (than English?). In the context of English, Arabic becomes a strange language. But in the Arabic context, Sarah becomes a stranger to Arabic. Sarah’s linguistic dilemmas emphasize the nexus of language, religion and schooling in Qatar and in many other places. As individuals engage in ever more increasing “close encounters,” they are forced to see themselves in the mirror of the “other.”

Linguistic Heterotopia and Metapragmatic Awareness

In Foucault’s 1967 talk entitled “Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias,” he outlines a definition for a term he identifies as heterotopia. According to Foucault, heterotopia can be found in physical places such as cemeteries, prisons, ships and in “heterotopias of crisis” such as old age, pregnancy and adolescence: periods or spaces of transition and transformation which reflect in their existence, the utopia or ideal time and space. The notion of heterotopia captured my attention because in its juxtaposition with utopia, it captures the transient nature of movement in the Gulf state of Qatar. Heterotopia’s reflection of utopia is captured in the example of the mirror:

The mirror is after all a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself,

that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is a sort of heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror **I discover my absence from the place where I am** since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; **I begin again to reconstitute myself there where I am.** The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (1967:3 emphasis mine).

Where Foucault has often placed greater power in the utopian mirror to define heterotopia, I would argue that individuals are always contesting and questioning whether the reflection in the mirror is accurate. As Foucault ends his section on the mirror, he finds the individual back in their body, “reconstituted,” but unsettled because of knowing that the mirror presents the individual to some degree, but how much, is still up for debate. This out of body experience in which an individual attempts to see themselves and their behavior from a different perspective, or in our case, a different language, produces a feeling of estrangement because it questions the very thing we make meaning through; language. In entering a linguistic heterotopia, an individual reflexively recognizes a discomfort with those language(s) being used in communication.

In this ethnographic study, I have shown that school reform has created a utopian vision of the knowledge economy that gives English a language ideology that associates it with international citizenship. In its mirror, Arabic appears strangely tied to religious institutions and religious texts. Those on the side of Arabic, see this through the history of the games that have been played using language in the region. Colonization and western imperialism are fresh in the minds of many of the older generation and Arabic, in its association to religion and a great

cultural history, must be defended. This is the reconstituted position after discussion and debate about the meta-narratives that circulated regarding Arabic. The emphasis in this study has been on how individuals debate and discuss language when faced with utopian images of another language. In the example of Sarah above we can see two instances where linguistic heterotopias were entered. The first is in Scotland in which Sarah sees Arabic through the mirror of English and comes to awareness that Arabic speakers refer to God more often in their speech than do English speakers. The second time, Sarah becomes the subject of meta-pragmatic conversation regarding the displacement of Arabic by English among graduates of English language universities and schools. While I could easily focus on only one conclusion made from meta-pragmatic speech about Arabic (that Arabic is too religious or that Arabs are losing their language), I have chosen to illustrate the debates that are produced when linguistic encounters occur. In doing so, I argue that language ideologies should account for variation and debate among speakers of language(s) in their meta-pragmatic talk about talk. When comparing multiple languages, users have greater awareness of language ideologies and are sensitive to the power and privilege granted different languages. Language ideology literature must not devalue this awareness or simplify it to conclude that language speakers are “limited” in their awareness of how these ideologies play a role in their lives.

Are Arabs Limited in Their Awareness of Arabic?

One of the most important findings of this study is that Arabs are discursively debating and discussing the merits of their own language(s) and recognizing the limitations imposed upon them and those they impose upon themselves. In scholarly studies of “other” cultures,

academics often want to apply a priori theories of language onto another setting and context. I have tried to avoid this by emphasizing my role as a mediator of individual meta-pragmatic awareness with the questions and theories that I myself am interested in. The result has been a corrective to the tendency in the literature on Arabic language to emphasize the diglossic aspect of Arabic at the expense of the native language speaker's awareness that languages are fluid in their speech community. But there is still the dilemma of how "aware" is the native speaker of their own language use and the language ideologies they are expounding.

Recent literature on language ideologies and meta-pragmatic awareness has focused on how aware individuals are of their language use and whether this is a result of the language's ability to reference itself or a lack of "awareness" on the part of the speaker (Lucy 1992; Silverstein 1981b; Verschueren 2000). Many of these ideas about language stem from a reading of Michael Silverstein's work on the meta-pragmatics of language and his development of Roman Jakobson's work on the functions of language and Whorf's theories on linguistic relativity (Silverstein 1976). Verschueren (2000) defines language ideologies as "taken for granted interpretations of activities and events" (450). So there is the idea that there are "limits to meta-pragmatic awareness" for the native speaker, but that this, Verschueren argues, does not remove the salience of a language for the user: "language users know more or less what they are doing when using language. Self-monitoring, at whatever level of salience is always going on" (2000: 444).

So how do we reconcile these positions, one in which we are "limited" in our awareness of the capabilities languages have and one in which we understand how to use language in a

given context, with the complication that arises from multiple languages? Let's return to Sarah and the contextualization of Arabic in two different settings. In Scotland, Sarah observes that the English speech community does not constantly refer to God in their speech and that religion is relatively (in contrast to where she is from) absent from social settings outside of religious institutions. When Arabic is in this setting, it does not seem to fit in the prevailing uses of language in the speech community. In the next context, that of a conference on Arab nations in Qatar, English is the strange language because it does not have salience in the language community, but this is being contested by Sarah and Nouf who want it to be accepted because of its status as an "international" language.

In approaching this questions from the perspective of multiple languages and what happens meta-pragmatically when they meet, I have argued that we see how strange language is vis a vis our own relationships with the language. Therefore, we take for granted "interpretations of activities and events" until we come against a mirror that reflects how strange our particular language is in juxtaposition to another language. This is an essential revision to the language ideology theory because it illustrates that native speakers will metapragmatically evaluate their own language as "limited" when they are performing their language in linguistic heterotopias. This should come as no surprise to the linguist or the anthropologist because that is at the heart of our enterprise. We come to know more about ourselves through study and analysis of another culture and similarly, our interlocutors engage in similar experiences of meta-pragmatic awareness.

But this brings up another problematic for the researcher. If individuals can identify limitations to their language(s) as they are used in society and do so because of a hierarchical evaluation of one language as more or less “religious,” should we allow one language ideology to supplant another for the native speaker? Most linguists have come to agree that all languages have the capacity for a wide range of communication. Whether they all do the same exact things in practice is based on specific places and the needs of the speakers. I would argue that we have to extend language “salience” to account for language “choice.” We have to let our interlocutors decide whether a language’s salience is enough to signal a language as fit for multiple mediums of communication or for one. We have to let them contest their own ideologies of language through debates that utilize meta-pragmatic awareness, while being aware of the dynamics of power and privilege that come with certain languages.

Schools, the Nation and Language Ideologies: A War of Two SuperLanguages

Schools are important places for playing these language games because they represent the working out of a national strategy towards language. While Anderson (1981) placed much of the emphasis on newspapers and the circulation of texts, I would argue that schools are equally, if not better, sites for studying how the imagined community is constructed because you can combine the oral and literate practices of the community. Anderson places too great a power in the language of writing to unify a community and this is major reason his theory fails to account for instances where standard literary practices differ markedly from spoken language. If we were try to extend Anderson’s theory to Qatar and other Middle East states, we would have to conclude that these are failed nations because they were unable to create a

national imaginary based on a vernacular that dethroned religious and scripted communities to create a secular polity. This conclusion might satisfy the denotational aspect of what we attribute to the “nation,” but it does not help us to understand communities that circulate their idea of imagined communities through multiple mediums and channels that are not rigidly bound to the notions of print or the secular nation state.

I have argued that rather than positing *a priori* conception of how languages should function that are based on ideologies of academia, we should inquire into the ways in which languages are used and perceived by their speakers. In both of Sarah’s stories, we see how juxtaposition of languages allows certain languages to take on particular ideologies because of the different realms they inhabit and the different purposes they serve. While Yasmin’s native Arabic allows her to speak in religious terms, English permits her to write on public forums and speak at international conferences. Each begins to take on an ideology because of the ways speakers connect their language practices to a special quality or purpose of the language. While all languages are capable of a diverse range of oral and literary expression, it is important to understand why particular languages take on the ideologies that they do.

Sarah, Mimi, Noorah, Muhammad and Suhaib represent Qatari and Arab youth who are struggling to reconcile their growing fluency and literacy in English with their partial knowledge of spoken and written Arabic. While these students are pushed to become “global citizens” through English language education, they are also tested for cultural and linguistic competence in Standard Arabic. Arabic teachers like Ahmed, Zeinab, Noorah and Ikhlas are those who are responsible for holding their Qatari and Arab students to levels of fluency in Standard Arabic.

As we saw throughout the chapters, these teachers are struggling to teach Standard Arabic in an environment where English is being increasingly favored as the language of the “knowledge economy.” I have argued that local languages are always competing on a scale of importance with regional and global languages. This competition often overshadows the natural linguistic diversity of human societies. In large part, Arabic teachers and students felt that Arabic was at its most vital in oral forms, regardless of whether they sometimes took on the form of dialects and other times that of Standard Arabic. Since many individuals interacted with fusha by listening and attending to it as speech, rather than literacy, fusha and the dialects were both considered vital elements of the Arabic speech community. This results in an important distinction between Arabic and English in the language and speech community in Qatar. Where English increasingly dominates in the language community, where Standard language and literacy are essential, Arabic, in both standard and regional forms, is still the primary language of oral speech and communication among Qataris and Arabs.

There is a considerable ideological connection to fusha that connects it to religious tradition. This ideology does not produce “discontemporaneity”, but does elevate the status of fusha over that of the dialects. Arabs, like Qaradawi, who connect fusha to both religious revival and Arab revival, usually denigrate the dialects in order to prioritize fusha. This vexes many language scholars, because the dialects and fusha are all linguistically speaking, each language with the possibility for a wide range of expression. This is a political move that allows Arabs to push for unity through utilizing the power of the Islamic discursive tradition, which is centered on the Qur’an. While this is problematic for a secular polity, it is not so troubling in communities where religious tradition is an accepted part of the culture. As Sarah notes, Arabic

language and Arab societies use religious expressions and connect religious faith to everyday practices. In the context of Qatar, these issues are increasingly complicated by the rising population of non-Qataris in the country and the growing demand and exposure to English language education. While English is “de-localized” by its connection to international agencies, Arabic is oppositionally localized and situated in particular traditions and practices.

I have also argued that it is through juxtaposition with English and its strong literacy ideology, that Standard Arabic looks “developmentally” inferior. People begin to question, why do Arabs speak one dialect in the speech community and use another dialect for writing in the language community? Although Arabic does have a strong ideology attached to it as the “language of the Qur’an,” it is not an ideology that places a priority on standardizing literacy practices in the same way that nation states require. While *fusha* is special because it gives access to the Qur’an, as Inayat Allah notes it is not required for Muslims to learn Arabic. Within the context of ethno-nationalisms, as witnessed in the writings of Ibn Khaldun, al-Jahiz, Sati’ Al Husri and Taha Hussein, standardizing Arabic language becomes a priority for political reasons. Pan-Arab and nationalist desires to elevate Arabic to the status of a standardized language of written and oral communication light upon language ideologies that consider dialects as inferior to the standard.

While anthropologists have historically championed the oral forms of language, in a scenario where language speakers are metapragmatically debating the merits of various languages, it is essential that we understand why certain languages are salient and for what purpose. In Qatar, the debates about language come to fall along certain fault lines because of

the unique history of the region. Language speakers identify the linguistic boundaries as occurring between English and Arabic and not between regional variations of Arabic and the Standard Arabic. In the debates on Al-Jazeera and the responses of Arabic teachers in schools in Qatar, Arabic is not a divided language, but a weak one that has had trouble becoming salient to speakers in the ways that English has. The primary arenas of Arabic's weakness are identified by Nouf's article on Arabizi and the Al-Jazeera debates as occurring in areas of technology and literacy practices. Arabs are increasingly favoring English in these areas and pushing Arabic to the margins.

This is difficult for Arabs, both Islamists and Pan-Arabists, to accept because Arabic has been an emblem of Arab greatness for many many centuries. The discussions and debates about Arabic are centered on how to make the language more powerful and useful for Arabs and there is an understanding that if Arab youth can learn and use English, a language even more foreign to the native Arabic speaker than Standard Arabic, why can they not learn Standard Arabic? There are several attempts being made by teachers and policy makers to come to support Arabic literacy and use in areas of technology. Dr. Zeinab and Dr. Ahmed are continuing to lead research on ways to teach Arabic better. There has been a recent decision at Qatar University, where resistance to English "colonization" has been its highest, to return the language of instruction in several programs to Arabic. Qatari and Arab youth in the region are trying to make Arabic more fun by using it on twitter and facebook.⁶⁹ The Qatar Foundation is

⁶⁹ In the Spring of 2012, the Qatari government decreed that many of the programs that were changed to English at Qatar University would revert to Arabic. This decision stirred up some press accounts of disgruntled students, but was generally welcomed by Qataris. In fall of 2012, QU received a record number of enrollments since the reforms imposed upon it. Another initiative started in fall 2011 called *Taghreedat*, a volunteer run effort to Arabize twitter

also supporting many forums where Arabic is used to debate and discuss social issues and to create appropriate children's programming. These programs and initiatives are examples of the "reconstituted" response to the increasing use of English in Qatari schools and society and are important arenas of future research.

Multilingualism in a Global Culture

One of the most striking things about studying language in Qatar is the extent to which a monolingual culture is no longer an option for Qataris. I would posit that Qataris should see their history of multi-lingualism in which Standard and regional varieties of Arabic are accepted as mutually intelligible and valuable to the speech community as an advantage in a "global culture" where many languages will be experiencing "close encounters." The Qatari government is trying to navigate these linguistic complexities by tacitly conforming to the one language one nation model, but in practice supporting the use of many languages. Standard English, Standard Arabic and Qatari Arabic have each become critical to indexing the state's ambitions, while rooting it in the region's history. In order to identify a space for national citizens, the state has continued to support the local dialects, customs and practices of tribal groups. But while they safeguard the position of national citizens, the Qatari state is also asking these citizens to interact and be at home with Arabs, Muslims, non-Arabs and non-Muslims through use of Standard English and Standard Arabic.

based originally in the United Arab Emirates. It has since grown to include Qataris and Arabs from nine other countries in the region. Volunteers promise to tweet only in Standard Arabic and are actively promoting the use of Standard Arabic throughout the region for cultural and religious reasons.

The reality of this ideal vision is a complex hierarchy of languages and cultures in Qatar. In order to balance the linguistic scales that have been tipped in favor of English, the government and the Qatar Foundation are opening new centers for Arabic and Islamic education. Sheikha Al Mayassa, the Emir and Sheikha Mozah's daughter, recently opened *Mathaf*, a Modern Museum of Arab Art, whose purpose is to be a "cultural instigator" throughout the region. In a speech titled, "Globalizing the Local and Localizing the Global," Shaykha Mayassa says, "we are changing our culture from within, but at the same time we are reconnecting with our traditions. We know that modernization is happening and yes, Qatar wants to be a modern nation, but at the same time we are reconnecting and reasserting our Arab heritage" (Al-Thani 2010). This initiative again highlights the desire of Qatar's leadership to connect to other Arab states and to the "modern" Western.

In the same speech, Sheikha Al Mayassa also says, "People have said, 'Let's build bridges,' and frankly, I want to do more than that. I would like break to the walls of ignorance between East and West." This is also an agenda of Sheikha Al Mayassa's mother and father, who want to re-write the narratives about Muslims, Arabs and Islam (Al-Missnedd 2003). Qatari leaders feel that Arabs and Muslims are misunderstood and are trying to speak in English to make Arabs (and Arabic) better understood. To a certain extent, as a small polity with a colonial history, Qataris have to operate strategically as "subalterns" on the world stage and navigate the question of "can the subaltern speak?" (Spivak 1988) by challenging what the dominant language says about them.

I am not arguing that the Qatari state and citizens are engaged in a subversive political movement, but I am suggesting that the moves that Qatari citizens and their government are making towards a “global” culture are reflective of their position in the mirror as minorities who have largely felt misunderstood by the dominant culture. That is why Al Mayassa is bent on breaking the “walls of ignorance between East and West.” Language plays a crucial role in this process as the subaltern Qatari contends with taking on the language of the colonizer and whether this means a betrayal of their “own” languages. In the process, it is easy to forget that having access to multiple languages is a positive and useful tool of the subaltern, who in speaking their language and the language of the other, may be able to place the mono-lingual in the position of the subaltern at some point. This is an important arena of future research in Qatar because it is clear that western expatriates, many of whom are mono-linguals, do not feel the need to learn Arabic because of the “global culture” in which English is quickly becoming a lingua franca. How will mono-linguals begin to feel in a world where everyone knows a second language, usually their own, but they do not have access to the language(s) of the multi-lingual. Could mono-lingualism eventually become the subaltern in a “global culture?”

Arabic and Islam: The Ties that Bind the Arab and the Muslim

Qataris in this study recognize that they are not only linguistic subalterns, but also religious subalterns in the mirror of a dominant Christian west. The role of Islam in this study has highlighted how religious discourse has supported Arabic and other languages, but also how it has been utilized in the political ambitions of Arabs. Non-Arab Muslims also play an important role in supporting Arabic as a language. Although I did not have the time to

incorporate the experiences of non-Arab Muslims in this study, they are a significant part of the Arabic language learning community. In the future, it would be important to interrogate how Arab and Non-Arab Muslims view Arabic and whether they have the same meta-pragmatic response to the Arabic language. Since this study has focused primarily on Arabic in Qatar, I will outline some of the implications of Arabic and Islam for the countries citizens and inhabitants.

Islam is an important aspect of Qatari society and politics. It is a yardstick that is used to judge Qatar's leadership. In order to show their allegiance to Islam, the Qatari state's leaders have built a national mosque and named it after Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab, the founder of Wahabism. It is unclear to what degree the Emir, Shaykha Mozah and the current leadership of Qatar's government are committed to a Wahabi understanding of Islam. In order to explore this, it would be important to interrogate the relationship of the ruling family with Yusuf Qaradawi and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In the beginning of 2012, Qatar Foundation also launched the Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics under the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies and made Tariq Ramadan its director. Tariq Ramadan is the great grandson of the first founder of the Muslim Brothers, Hassan al-Banna, and an academic who has taught and published in French, English and Arabic. Through the support of individuals such as Tariq Ramadan, Yusuf al Qaradawia and many others, the Qatari leadership is trying to create a center of Islamic intellectual thought in its capital city.

Finally, the Qatari state's involvement in the revolutions throughout the region has produced criticism that Qatar's leadership is supporting political and perhaps "wahabi" Islam in these countries. The variation and range within the Muslim community in their approach to

Islam as a religion needs to be explored further for meta-pragmatic discussions of Arabic language ideologies. As noted by one of the debators on *Itijah Al Mu'akis*, there are Arab Muslims who believe that Arabic is a “sacred” language. How widespread is this view and does it have any correlation to particular Islamic political movements?

This raises another issue regarding the relationship between regional states and “international” coalitions based on ethnicity, language and/or religion. Is the Qatari state moving towards consolidating and creating coalitions throughout the region based on religious and ethnic affiliation or is the state simply supporting “development” throughout the region? If the former is the case, it would be the first time since the Ottoman Empire that the region might have a focus on something beyond the nation-state. Stable coalitions are highly improbable, but the state’s leadership will likely continue to use allegiance to Islam and Arab culture as important points of collaboration with other states throughout the region. It will be important to study the internal dynamics between those whose interpretation of Islamic tradition is strictly along Wahabi lines and those, like the leadership of Qatar, that are taking from a modernist Muslim position on many issues to understand how these varying visions of Islam can be used to collaborate and consolidate support throughout the region.

Another area for further exploration is on the question of language, Islam and agency. Saba Mahmood (2005) argues that agency among Muslim women in Egyptian society is mediated by their relationship with a religious tradition and in embodying that tradition. By conforming to certain behaviors, these women embody piety and become agents of change in their families and communities. This religiously conceptualized theory of agency extends

theorizing into the metapragmatic space of the believer. It might be useful to see language and agency in similar ways, as structured through secular and religious views of agentic selves.

While Mahmood uses Ibn Khaldun's theory of *malaka*, it would be beneficial to see if there are other philosophical constructs coined by Muslims that might aptly explain Muslim attitudes towards language and behavior in society.

This study also highlights how important contestations and oppositions are to forming language ideologies. Further genealogical and diachronic studies of language ideologies in the writings and ideas of Muslims would be beneficial to understanding what types of language and discourse resonated among Arabic speakers, Muslim and non, and continue to do so. How have Muslim Arab thinkers been able to convince each other of the value of Arabic by utilizing political upheaval and cultural and religious discourses? These issues are also connected to nationalism and whether or not religious ideologies of language can elide the one print language - one nation paradigm.

Language, Nationalism and Internationalism

If we understand linguistic nationalisms as arising out of contestations within the speech community, the Qatari states efforts to create multilingual citizens with a global perspective have important consequences for an emerging concept of the "international" citizen. It will be interesting to study how this citizenship is linguistically, legally and politically regulated, or if it will continue to be rhetoric utilized to engender support for globalizing projects. The emergence of new lines of "international" citizenship can be witnessed in the ease of travel between Qatar and many western states. In contrast, it is increasingly becoming difficult for

easterners to travel in and out of Qatar as these individuals' movements are highly regulated. The evolution of an "international" citizen will likely be along lines of national citizenship and states that have close relationships might begin to allow free movement of nationals between their states. There have been talks about a Gulf Cooperation Council card that would allow nationals from the varying Gulf States to move about easily from one state to the next. There are also talks about a bridge to Bahrain and opening up trade and labor force movement. But these talks have been impeded by each state's desire to maintain autonomy over their internal affairs and in particular, because of fear of the power and size of Saudi Arabia, which might try to dominate and subsume the smaller Gulf States under its umbrella.

Language regionalism is most likely to continue to rely on Standard and regional dialects of Arabic while "internationalism" would most likely occur through Standard English. Both elide the need for one print language to mediate the Qatari citizen's relationship with the state. While the Qatari citizen can be identified through their use of Qatari Arabic and oral communication in that dialect, they are also being called upon by the government to become plurilingual and cross regional and international boundaries to create alliances with other countries and states. The potential to explore different types of international and regional print and oral communities is possible because national citizen is no longer directly connected to one print language. Qatari citizens who are increasingly being encouraged and financially supported to learn English will have to read newspapers in both Standard English and Standard Arabic in order to know what is happening across the linguistic communities they are apart of. It would be important to study how newspapers in multiple languages are used and how individuals view their reading of certain types of papers as connected to their participation in different

communities. In the SFS Qatar library, newspapers from Britain and France were side by side with regional GCC newspapers and national newspapers run by Qataris. There was also a distinction in Qatar between newspapers for expatriates in Qatar, written in English, (Gulf Times, Peninsula) and those for national citizens, written in Arabic (Al Raya, Al Sharq).

This focus on newspapers could lead to a reevaluation or expansion of Anderson's thesis of the imagined community that incorporates the perspective of multi-linguals. How do multi-linguals participate in many different imagined communities? Is print still the main medium or do most people now get their news from the internet or tweets? What happens to the Qatari who attends only English schools and reads only in English? Will newspapers cater to this community and how will they connect the national citizens if some are reading in English and others are reading in Arabic? What will the transfer process look like from news in one language to another? Already in Qatar, newspapers that are geared towards expatriates (printed in English) focus on issues that are important to these communities, highlighting news about American, Indian and British private schools and announcing events in these communities. On the other hand, the Arabic newspapers report on the state's recent initiatives, events at Qatar University and public schools and on the marriages and deaths of prominent Qatari families. These different mediums of communication bring up the variable importance of literacy to these discussions. While English is largely taught with a focus on print literacy, this attitude and focus is not reflected in the Arabic speech and language community.

Language [Literacy] Ideologies, Schooling and Religion

Language ideologies incorporate the different ways in which language is used, whether in oral or literate forms. I have argued that Arabic speakers have a stronger relationship to Arabic in their oral practices and that there is growing demand for literacy in English that is challenging this paradigm. Schools are playing a major role in this mirroring of language. As Arabic teachers observe students speaking, reading and writing in English and see these same students struggling with Arabic literacy, this raises questions about the literacy ideologies that individuals have to navigate and debate as they participate in Qatari society. Marcia Farr (2010) has argued that literacy ideologies should be interrogated for “two important aspects of ‘literacy reality’ — one, that it is language and literacy purism (not dialect features) that function as impediments to literacy learning (Adger, Wolfram & Christian, 2007), and two, that ‘literacy’ itself has varying definitions, from the purely linguistic (which applies across cultures and across time) to the cognitive (which is culturally-determined)” (21). The first refers to the tendency in teaching literacy to correct the student’s speech practices in favor of the standard language and to constantly mirror the individual’s language use through a utopian mirror. The latter aspect refers to the tendency to elide the different expectations people have of what they should be able to do with literacy. Much of what is emphasized in western education is the use of literacy for “critical thinking” while being able to read and write a language is often the minimal definition used by many other societies to define one as literate.

These differences are critical in multi-lingual and cross-cultural situations where expectations vary on what one does with language. In particular, more work needs to be done

on the literacy ideologies associated with learning Arabic for religious purposes. If Qatari students are expected to be literate in Standard Arabic, what types of literacy practices do they engage in at home and in relationship to the Qur'an, which has been noted several times as the number one reason many Arabs must "defend" Arabic? In addition, what do children do at home with literacy in Arabic and English? Is it enough for one to simply be able to participate in a literacy event (Heath 1982) or does one need to be using their literacy skills to critically analyze and challenge others in their reading and writing of similar texts? While it was suggested by RAND that this is not already occurring in Arabic, there are several events and discussions throughout this study that illustrate that critical thinking about Arabic is occurring in many different spheres throughout Qatar. In schools, the media and at home, Arabic is being used both orally and in literate forms to engage in meta-pragmatic talk about Arabic. This exploration is much needed to broaden the scope and reach of language ideologies literature and theorizing.

Contributions to Gulf Studies

Gulf Studies has heretofore focused on political relationships between Great Britain, Saudi Arabia and the Indian Ocean trade route. Only recently have scholars begun to interrogate the complex array of questions that the influx of labor, ideas and things into the Gulf Region might mean for national citizens, "outsiders," and for academia. As my ethnography highlights, there are "close encounters" occurring in almost every imaginable space in Qatar. These encounters could be used to challenge ideas we have about nationalism, religion, linguistic homogeneity, the private and public, the peripheral and the parochial. As

Qatar and its neighboring states try to bring people from all over the world into their country and to shoot out ideas of what it means to be “modern” Arabs and Muslims, there are several confluences and conflagrations that are taking place. Schools, art, fashion, cuisine, language and architecture are all on the table to be re-imagined, re-built and critiqued through the eyes of the mediators of what is considered “local” and “global.”

Gulf Studies provides a platform for making connections between “East and West” and also for looking at these connections in small populations. The major challenge to Gulf Studies is the perception that the region is unworthy of interest because of its small population and humble roots. While there are a few individuals who might meet the stereotype of a spoiled Khaliji spending his or her government’s money on expensive western merchandise, there are many more individuals who are struggling and contending with questions of identity, religion, language and culture in these states. Instead of polarizing views of the Gulf citizens as “glittering empty shells” or “wahabi salafis,” it would be beneficial to study the region as full of potential mediators, diversifying and multiplying difference while simultaneously being informed and influenced by projects of modernity, nationalism and globalization.

Epilogue: Two Little Reflections in my Linguistic Mirror

This study has followed me throughout my experiences as a student of anthropology and education, as a mother and as multi-lingual navigating diverse continents, countries and cities. It has helped me to think through the challenges of constantly reflecting and seeing myself through the mirror of others. Each of us must return home, to ourselves, after our travels and studies to contend with the complexity of our theorizing in our daily lives. In this epilogue, I would like to share some of the ongoing challenges and debates I am contending with that relate to this study. I opened this study with a history of my relationship to multiple languages; Arabic, English and Bengali, and I end with how these relationships continue to evolve.

When I began this study, I was a mother of one daughter, whom I had decided to attempt to raise multilingual. I spoke to my daughter in Bangla, her father spoke to her in Arabic and we hoped that she would easily pick up English from family and friends and eventually in school. This worked pretty well in the first two years because we lived apart from family and spent a lot of time talking, reading and “teaching” her our chosen languages. While some of our family members were concerned that she would not pick up English or that she would speak English with an accent, this fear was allayed in the years between three and four when she began to attend an English preschool. While in Qatar during field work, this daughter also attended Arabic pre-schools, while another daughter came into the world. By the end of

our stay, the oldest daughter was speaking bits of Qatari Arabic and also rapidly picking up English.

Things became linguistically more complicated when we returned to the United States. While writing up this ethnography, my youngest daughter was being taken care of by my mother, who spoke to her in a mixture of Bangla and English. My oldest daughter we placed in a school that had an Arabic curriculum. We wanted to continue to develop her Arabic skills as she became more and more fluent in English. While our oldest daughter had spent her first two years being primarily spoken to in either Arabic or Bangla, the youngest was being rapidly introduced to all three languages through socialization with English speaking children. Add to this the existence of an older sibling who was increasingly speaking English with everyone except her parents.

I finished writing this ethnography in Jackson, Mississippi with my two girls entering school/daycare where English is spoken all the time. No longer surrounded by family or a community large enough to support Arabic learning, the responsibilities of raising multi-lingual children were becoming daunting. My husband began lessons after school on Arabic vocabulary and grammar with both girls and I realized I needed to pull out the Bangla books that I had used with my older daughter to start helping my younger daughter gain a better vocabulary in Bengali. It had been decided before we moved to Mississippi that I would take a trip to Bangladesh with the girls to get some immersion in Bangla. The trip was two and a half weeks and a small refresher in Bangla, but not enough to quell the tide of English in my little girls' lives.

The most recent struggle in the lives of my (hope to be) multi-linguals is the struggle to learn to read and write in English. In school, this process has already begun for my oldest daughter, whose struggles with flipping letters and sounding out words are quickly becoming the most important after school focus. As a former teacher of English literacy and an anthropologist interested in language ideologies, I knew that we were being caught in the net of schooling practices that emphasized testing and failure, rather than success. What is a parent to do? Home school their child? Put them in private school? Get them a private tutor? Or try to help their children be successful in the institutions and communities they are becoming members of?

As I went through this process, I realized that these are the same dilemmas facing many Qatari parents and children many miles away. We each get stuck in the familiar, cultural and social nets that are in place, while trying to figure our way through them to navigate linguistic and social success for ourselves and our children. We often get caught up in the expectations placed by the language ideologies of our society and begin to think only one language can lead us to economic success or to God. But in reality, languages are mirrors into another world that can perhaps help us to see ourselves more clearly. They refract and reflect our own light or lack thereof, but they are not in and of themselves utopias.

There are studies every day touting the benefits of bilingual education for children, but I am not trying to teach my kids different languages because I think it will develop them cognitively (although this is a great side benefit). My interests in multiple language stems from my interest in different cultures and peoples. As a multi-lingual who can and has successfully

crossed many language borders to find that they are porous, I come back to reflect on the Qur'an when it says, "and of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your **languages** and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge" (Qur'an 30:22). Linguistic diversity is a given, a natural gift to people. When we distort this into fodder for politics, for religious dispute or stereotypes, we are going against the grain. The natural grain is for people to learn from one another, not create boundaries that divide us. What are the boundaries we are placing between languages and how are we keeping our children and ourselves from learning a new way to say something or to write something in a different language? This is a question that I think needs to be studied and reflected upon.

I know this does not resolve the many dilemmas that are posed throughout this study. Individuals navigating complex linguistic expectations require more than a religious verse or a uniform language policy touting the benefits of bilingualism. We need individuals who are willing to share their love of language(s), to teach and illustrate how beautiful it is to speak, read and write. We also need institutions that support multiple ways of working with words. One of the consistent challenges I face as a multilingual, trying to raise children with more than one language in their lives, is the relative ways I use these languages. English is the dominant language in our lives as each of us lives and works in speech communities that emphasize not only spoken proficiency in a Standard English, but also in reading and writing. Bangla is primarily an oral language in which we communicate when we are together. Arabic is both a written and a spoken language in our household, but also is affected by the time we can give to its study after a full day of school, work and homework. I would like to teach my children to read in Bangla, but I fear that I do not have the resources to sustain it. There are also moments

where I wonder whether we must, as a family, create a space at home in which we can immerse ourselves in one language (since we are linguistically divided family).

These are the dilemmas of sustaining multiple languages and multiple “ways with words” in a mono-lingual, mono-literate speech community. I know there are spaces and communities in which multiple languages can be sustained (such as the Scandinavian countries, South and East Asia, Africa), but my research illustrates that the growing importance of literate practices (usually in English) tied to schools and the economy are changing the dynamic and flow between multiple languages. As we move more and more towards a world in which English is becoming a second, if not a first, language for many, we have to contend with how to support multi-lingualism and multi-literacy. Questions of identity and belonging might also become more fluid if we can encourage one another to cross linguistic boundaries and communicate with people through languages they understand and value.

The children are brought to perform *these* actions, to use *these* words as they do so, and to react in *this* way to the words of others. (Wittgenstein 2009: 6).

Wittgenstein redefined language as a language game reflecting a particular “life world” in his *Philosophical Investigations*. In the above quote, Wittgenstein emphasizes the training that children undergo when we initiate them into a language. I find this quote particularly relevant to the dilemmas of language that have been posed throughout these pages and in my day to day life. As I play language games with my children and as we build different languages, I also recognize that at any one point, we can stop building. This is an option available to those of us who have more than one code by which we communicate. This process is already starting in the language game between myself and my younger daughter. Already very fluent in English,

when I go to give her a block in Bangla, she gives me a block back in English. Because I know what that block means and can use it to continue building our conversation (and often times do), I am teaching her that it is okay for her to work with language in this way (to take block A in language A, and give me back block A in language B).

This complicates the language game, but it also demonstrates how important the language games we play with children are to helping them construct meaning. Wittgenstein focuses on the doing, the practice and use of language as the source of meaning. This mutual co-consenting co-construction gives life to language. Why is this significant for a study of multiple languages? Because it shows that despite the limitations of particular ways of working with words that a specific language has, individuals can, through language games, build associations and relationships across language. This might be an act of borrowing or translation, but as long as it works in the language game that is what gives it life. This leads to one of Wittgenstein's conclusions that I find particularly helpful: it is in the doing that we find our meaning. So perhaps the answer is to forge ahead in our experimental multi-lingualism and figure out how to sustain multiple languages and ways with words. This new building might help us to see ourselves and others in ways we would never have seen before.

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Appendix A: Speeches of Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al Missned

Event	Date	Location	Topic	Themes
UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education	June 23 2003	Paris, France	Reform and Innovation in Education, Democracy as a basic need before education can work	<p>Culture of quality</p> <p>Radical changes in Qatar- strong alliances, competitive education, research initiatives, equity</p> <p>1) Charter Schools 2) State university reform, 3) private funding for private universities</p> <p>Reconsider archaic methods, Democracy needed</p> <p>Fund for Iraq</p> <p>Cultural integrity</p> <p>Knowledge based education and holistic and global education</p>
Education City Inauguration	October 13, 2003	Doha	“The Sidra tree, growing strong and proud in the harshest of environments, has been a symbol of perseverance and nourishment across the borders of the Arab world”	<p>Citizens our richest resources,</p> <p>“we should not transfer any idea into a cult and bound ourselves to worship it., but we set out on our journey with open-minded flexibility and genuine curiosity”</p> <p>“Education City as the prototypical educational network of the future”</p> <p>Qatar Foundation: Qatar Academy, Learning Center, Academic Bridge Program, VCU, CMC, TAMUQ, RAND-QPI, STP,</p>
Graduation Ceremony at Texas A&M	December 19, 2003	Texas, USA	Embracing Change	<p>Dead and living traditions</p> <p>Meeting of cultures, not melting</p> <p>Religion as agent of change</p> <p>Women imp. Part of every society. Dead traditions place constraint on women</p>
Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee	October 2 , 2004	Michigan	Relations between East and West	Monoliths, freedom, creativity and innovation, don't fear the West
Doha International Family Conference	November 29, 2004	Doha	Role of the Family	Restore importance of family to creating healthy societies
Oxford Center for Islamic Studies	March 18 th , 2005	London	Globalization, Education and Human Development	Meeting, not melting of cultures. History of Arab scientists and philosophers, Education, Culture of Quality
Euro-Gulf Forum	June 19 2005	France	Culture of dialogue	<p>Education key to human development</p> <p>Tahtawi and Abdu- learning from the west</p> <p>Endowment</p>

				Globalization- openness “Islam in its universal dimension is capable of adaptation and compatibility with the requirements of each age”
Arab Women Past and Present: Participation and Democratization	March 3, 2006	Doha	Narratives, unraveling	Dominant Cultures, conformity to them , one narrative is trying to impose on others “need to reclaim tradition has been a prominent discourse in Arab societies, particularly over the last 20 years or so... What is our tradition?” Loyal to Islamic tradition-grants women equal rights Culture of quality, questioning for both men and women
The Founding Conference of Expatriate Arab Scientists	April 24, 2006	Doha	Human Development, Research and Science	Arab Traditions of research, science, learning
Innovation in Education Conference II- Technology, Empowerment and Education	April 30 2006	Doha	UNESCO and Qatar Foundation	Research, asking questions, “When we look forward to the future, we should always carry our pasts with us. Bringing our traditions into the present is also a critical part of the equation for success, especially in our region” science in tradition, Islam encourages knowledge Confidence Critical thinking
Commencement Speech at Carnegie Mellon	May 21, 2006	Pittsburg	Dialogue between East and West	“Civil society, a cornerstone of democracy, has always played a vibrant role in Islamic cultures. Islamic society, from the earliest period, has had a system of checks and balances that prevent all power from lying in the hands of the state. For example, the Ulama—intellectuals and legal scholars—have been compared by some experts to the mass media in contemporary society.” Dialogue, think, get to know
Speech at James Baker Institute	May 21, 2007	James Baker Institute, US	Women’s Issue in Context: Deframing the Discourse on Middle Eastern Women	Deframe debate- not secularism or radicalism as the solution, but a balanced approach to the position of a women from a sociological perspective
Conference on Youth	May 15 2007	Los Angeles	War on Cyncism, Winning young minds	Fear of our own children. Provide models, paradigm shift Offer youth more opportunities to be creative, critical thinking skills, education,

Appendix B: Private English Language Schools

	Administration	English, Math and Science Curriculums	Arabic/Islamic Studies Teachers
Gulf English School	British principal/Caucasian	British Standards/ International Baccalaureate	Don't feel respected by some students. Hours not enough to teach. "Prestige" of learning English for parents and students. At Upper levels, Arabic is reduced to preparing for International Baccalaureate Exam. Respect "foreign" teachers and staff more than Arab. "الضعيف في الاولى ضعيف في اللغة الثانية"
Middle East International School	American Principal/African American	American curriculum	English is introduced in pre-kindergarten, Arabic in Kindergarten. There was an increase in hours of Arabic instruction, last year it was four, now it is five. Very diverse student and staff population so English the primary language. Principal: "The Qataris don't know what they are doing. They bring in people, then they get rid of them. They don't respect experience." He was a part of the initial reforms, but then was not rehired. He is now doing various projects in Doha while writing a book and traveling extensively.
Oxford English School	Jordanian Principal	British Curriculum	Principal used to be Arabic Department Head for Gulf English School. "They want the English, but they are worried. They always come to me and ask, 'will it change the mentality? Did you see this letter? What does it mean' For this school, there is a satisfied feeling for parents" They want social studies in Arabic. Parents want progress in English and maintain Arabic. They get broken Arabic and English from maids and nannies. "I am always keen to tell them to respect your own language. People will respect you more."
Qatar Academy	American Principal/Caucasian	American Curriculum	للأسف يبدأ التركيز على الطفل في المنزل بتعليمه اللغة الثانية (الإنجليزية) قبل (العربية)، ويستمر الحال ، فيخسر الطفل اللغة الأم بسبب إهمال الأهل -ريم "It is unfortunate that the focus in the household has become on teaching the child the second language (English) before (Arabic) and if it continues, the child will lose his mother tongue because of parental neglect." Reem التركيز على اللغة الإنجليزية في جميع المواد الدراسية عدا حصص اللغة العربية والتربية الإسلامية يؤدي إلى عدم وجود أي دعم للغة العربية خارج حدود أحياناً لدى الطلاب فيها الحصص وبالتالي يساعد على وجود الضعف- مياسة "The focus on the English language in all the subjects except the Arabic and Islamic education lesson leads to the lack of any support for the Arabic language outside the limits of the lesson and also sometimes creates students who have weaknesses."- Mayasa
Hayat Universal Bilingual Schools (HUBS)	American Principal/Hispanic	Canadian Curriculum	Owned by Kuwaiti intellectual Ibrahim Al Khulaifi, a psychologist by profession. Focus on creating moral and thoughtful students. الطلاب يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية طوال اليوم. تدخل مدرسة اللغة العربية أو الشرعية كل اليوم أو يوم واحد في الاسبوع. "The student studies English all day. When the Arabic teacher enters or the Islamic studies teacher, it is only once a day or sometimes once a week." Arabic teachers work with English teachers. Library has a section for Arabic and English and thematic units cover religious holidays.

Appendix C: Independent/Charter/Public Schools

Omar Bin Khattab Primary for boys	Five Arabic teachers	<p>There is a return to the way the Ministry used to run the schools</p> <p>Reforms are فشل كبير a big failure</p> <p>Students don't know Arabic or English well.</p> <p>A Qatari teacher who taught for many years in the Ministry schools said that the new Supreme Education Council is doing a 360 and returning to the old MOE curriculum in Arabic and Islamic Studies, despite the calls for reform and new ways of teaching Arabic,</p>
Amna Bint Wahab Preparatory and Secondary for Girls	Two Arabic teachers, head of Arabic department	<p>Girls don't like using Arabic, they prefer English. They speak their dialects during class time and also use a lot of English when they speak.</p> <p>Very good school where the students do well on standardized tests in English and Arabic</p> <p>Arabic teachers not pleased with student performance in their classes.</p> <p>Strong sense that Arabic is neglected by students and parents.</p> <p>Arabic head does not understand the reason why they chose English for math and science, saying "Didn't they use Arabic for all of these things during the golden age of Islam"</p> <p>The Arabic teachers said it is important to learn Arabic because it is the language of the Qur'an.</p>
Al Bayyan Preparatory and Secondary School for Girls	Head of Arabic Department	<p>Very positive. Felt reforms were good and that if the teacher is good and the student tries, than the current Arabic program is very good. Al Bayyan systematically performs well on standardized tests in all subjects. It is a magnet school for girls.</p> <p>The head Arabic teacher spoke of her own desire to improve her teaching and to motivate other Arabic teachers to do the same. She implied that the onus was on the teacher to make learning more enjoyable for the students rather than complaining about students.</p>
Khadija Primary School	Three Arabic Teachers, Three English Teachers	<p>The direction of higher education influencing lower levels and pushing the introduction of English earlier and earlier.</p> <p>English teacher who feels that the schools don't teach enough Arabic. She supplements at home and encourages her children to speak. She tries to implement a time when everyone has to speak Standard Arabic, although the children find it challenging, she thinks it is important.</p> <p>As primary teachers, they find that the children's Arabic at this stage is much better than their English so the emphasis on home is on learning the English alphabet and reading.</p> <p>Effect of Baraem. Some students incorporate more <i>fusha</i> into their speech.</p> <p>Principal informed me that they recommended to the SEC that more of the school day should be in Arabic so students language skills are strengthened in Arabic before learning English.</p>
Al Shaima Secondary School for Girls	Five Arabic Teachers	<p>Won awards for teaching Arabic. Teachers feel the reforms emphasize English too much and there is a movement away from the culture.</p> <p>They received several awards when all the schools used to be Arabic medium, but now they are making the transition to teaching English in Math and Science. The teachers spoke of being unsure if they would continue in the new Independent schools as the hours were long. The head teacher, in the current system, could go home and breastfeed her daughter and return to resume her duties. This is not looked highly upon in the newer independent schools where the competitive environment demands teacher work longer hours.</p>

Appendix D: Text of Dr. Kubaisi's Critiques of Education Reform in Qatar

التطبيق الخاطئ لنظام المدارس المستقلة حولها إلى مؤسسات ربحية
 وصول النظام التعليمي للمستويات العالمية مجرد ادعاءات لهيئة التعليم
 إضافة المدرسين موضوعات للمناهج يتعارض مع اختصاصاتهم
 فلسفة النظام التربوي غائبة والاستراتيجية غامضة
 ترك تقدير المقررات لأصحاب التراخيص.. خلل تربوي
 آثار خطيرة لاعتماد الإنجليزية في تدريس العلوم والرياضيات
 هل تخلي النظام التعليمي عن التدريس باللغة الرسمية وفقاً للدستور
 دعم مدارس دون أخرى يهدد بانعدام مبدأ تكافؤ الفرص بين الطلاب
 ترك الصالح 2008

Appendix E: Private and “Community” Schools in Qatar in 2007

List of Private Schools in Qatar	Nationality/ Curriculum	Price(Month)	Primary Language
Al Jazeera Academy (AJA)	Qatari	400-800	English
Al Maha English Schools	Qatari	500-700	English
American School of Doha	American	800-1000	English
Bangladesh MHM School & College	Bangladesh	150-250	Bengali, English
Bright Future Pakistani School	Pakistan	100-200	Urdu, English
Central English Speaking Kindergarten (CESK)			English
Compass International School, Doha (CISD)			English
Doha Academy		500-700	English
Doha College			English
Doha English Speaking School			English
Doha Montessori & British School	Great Britain		English
Modern Indian School	India	200-400	English, Hindi
English Modern School			English
Ideal Indian School	India		English, Hindi
International School of London-Qatar	Great Britain		English
MES Indian School	India		English, Hindi
Michael E. DeBakey High School for Health Professions at Qatar	American		English
Middle East International School			English, Arabic
Park House English School	Great Britain		English

Qatar Academy	"International"		English
Qatar International School	"International"		English
Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs			English
The Cambridge International School for Girls	Great Britain		English
The Cambridge School - Doha	Great Britain	800-1000	English
The International School of Choueifat – Doha	Lebanese		French, English
Iranian High School	Iran		Persian, English
Palestinian Elementary School	Palestine		Arabic, English
Phillipino School	Phillipines		English, Philipino
Stafford International School	Indonesian		English
Jordanian School	Jordan		English, Arabic
Lebanese School	Lebanon		French, Arabic
Qatar Canadian School	Canada		English, French